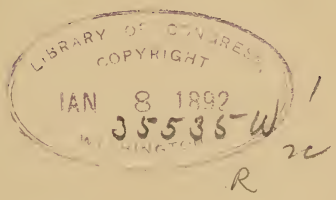
WELLS OF ENGLISH.

BY

ISAAC BASSETT CHOATE.

"Dan Chaucer, well of English undefyled."
SPENSER'S *Faërie Queene.*



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N.

If there were any need whatever of the sanction of some name of weight and authority upon literary matters to justify a careful, painstaking study of the less-known contributors to early English literature, it would be quite enough to refer one to what is said by Principal Shairp in regard to the exclusive study which is commonly given to a few master-spirits whom he calls "the great world-poets of all times." Of those who have never aspired to this high rank he has these generous words to say: —

"For the whole host of lesser, though still genuine, poets, much more for the source whence all poetry comes, we are apt to have but scanty regard. It is well, perhaps, that for a short time, as students, we should so concentrate our gaze; for we thus get a standard of what is noblest in thought and most perfect in expression. But this exclusiveness should continue but a little while, and for a special purpose. If it be prolonged into life, if we continue only to admire and enjoy a few poets of the greatest name, we become, while fancying ourselves to be large-minded, narrow and artificial."

More concisely stated, the perfectly reasonable argument amounts to this, that we should go to the great poets to learn what our literature ought to be, but

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INTRODUCTION.

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More concisely stated, the perfectly reasonable argument amounts to this, that we should go to the great poets to learn what our literature ought to be, but

to those of lower rank to find out what our literature has been and is. What is here said of the poets is equally applicable to prose writers in relation to purely literary work.

It is also to be considered that there are whole libraries of books that have been written upon Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton. Many of the less-known subjects require to be studied at first hand; that is, in their writings themselves. The general reader only here and there comes across some faint allusion to them or to their work. The clew thus found will lead direct to our best libraries, and a little searching will prove how small a proportion of the literature of more than two hundred and fifty years ago is to be found there. The disappointment will be all the easier to be borne when it is considered that this condition of things illustrates well the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. It could not be otherwise than that much that was good in the past, if not some even of the best, should be eclipsed by the constantly improving quality of an advancing literature.

As the history of letters is continuous in the same manner as the history of the race goes on without a break, it is not difficult to trace many an impulse it has here and there received from delicate touches in the past. No one can fail to see that every indication of improvement in English letters as well as in English life and character stands for some good, honest work in England's past. This thought gives interest to the man who stands back of the work, and it forms a bond of comradeship among those who have toiled in the past and those who are toiling now in the common

field. It puts the present leader in touch with kindred spirits all along the line.

The field of inquiry into which the student of our literature enters, presents numberless points of interest and as many points of view to be chosen according to individual taste. There are thousands who have given some new thought or new turn of expression to our literature, and there are other thousands who deserve not to be forgotten, because they have themselves saved from forgetfulness what was becoming obscure and obsolete in their time. The claims of all these are in a certain measure recognized whenever with painstaking care we turn to study the work of any deserving one of their number. Slowly the great host breaks into separate groups, from which a representative man may easily be taken.

It is to be said, by way of recommending to study authors of less reputation, that these deal more commonly with affairs of everyday life right about them. They see things at a closer view than do those who are favored with diviner vision. Their lives and their fortunes are likely to coincide more nearly with the life the masses lead. Their work throbs with purely human pulses. They give a clear estimate of the worth of life to them, and that is about its worth to the toiling masses whom they represent. Through them we gain a touch with humanity across the ages as close and warm and true as the hand clasp of a friend.

It is just this intimate social acquaintance with our early English authors and with those for whom they wrote that the writer of these sketches has sought to

gain at the same time that he was forming an intellectual acquaintance with their work. His researches have led him by many pleasant ways through England under a morning sky, and often has he come upon a path in Old England that led straight over here to New England, —

> But to a broader view this home 's entire;
> Our mother-tongue is heard in either part,
> Our altars kindled from a common fire,
> Our pulses beating from one single heart.

The writer has dipped but rarely here and there from what was at once the supply and the outflow of a deep national life. If any reader feels inclined to follow to these springs of our common literature, he is promised an introduction such as shall at any rate secure a cordial greeting and a social glass at least to quaff from these Wells of English.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	v
I.	THOMAS OF ERCELDOUNE	11
II.	JOHN BARBOUR	21
III.	WILLIAM LANGLAND	29
IV.	JOHN BALL	37
V.	HENRY BRADSHAW	44
VI.	JOHN SKELTON	52
VII.	WILLIAM DUNBAR	60
VIII.	ROBERT HENRYSON	67
IX.	SIR THOMAS MORE	73
X.	SIR THOMAS ELYOT	81
XI.	SIR THOMAS WYATT	89
XII.	THOMAS TUSSER	95
XIII.	HENRY HOWARD	103
XIV.	GEORGE PUTTENHAM	110
XV.	SIR WALTER RALEIGH	117
XVI.	GEORGE CHAPMAN	125
XVII.	ROBERT GREENE	132
XVIII.	SAMUEL DANIEL	139
XIX.	JOSHUA SYLVESTER	146
XX.	MICHAEL DRAYTON	151
XXI.	CYRIL TOURNEUR	159

PAGE

XXII. CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE 166
XXIII. THOMAS MIDDLETON 174
XXIV. JOHN MARSTON 182
XXV. THOMAS HEYWOOD 189
XXVI. JOHN TAYLOR 197
XXVII. PHILIP MASSINGER 204
XXVIII. ROBERT HERRICK 211
XXIX. IZAAK WALTON 217
XXX. JAMES SHIRLEY 223
XXXI. THOMAS BROWNE 229
XXXII. THOMAS RANDOLPH 236
XXXIII. THOMAS FULLER 244
XXXIV. WILLIAM CARTWRIGHT 251
XXXV. RICHARD CRASHAWE 258
XXXVI. SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE 266
XXXVII. RICHARD LOVELACE 273
XXXVIII. WILLIAM CHAMBERLAYNE 281
XXXIX. ANDREW MARVELL 287
XL. JOHN EVELYN 294

INDEX 303

WELLS OF ENGLISH.

I.

THOMAS OF ERCELDOUNE.

1240–1298.

WHENEVER we are talking about Chaucer and call him "the father of English poetry," we think, as a matter of course, that the form at least of English verse was settled by him, or at any rate by the poets of his time who lived in the South of England. It is a common impression that before his day all the elements of our poetry were lying in disorder and open to license. They are often spoken of as then having first been reduced to law and system. This popular opinion would also be a perfectly reasonable one if we were allowed in studying our literature to reason upon analogies. The parts about London were far in advance of those north of the Tweed six hundred years ago in all refinement and embellishment of common life, — very much farther, no doubt, than at the present day. Equal advancement would naturally be looked for in the literature of the South. There is good reason, however, for thinking that this view would be unjust to the people of the North and historically inexact.

The very excellent reason we have for this conclusion is that the verse of Thomas of Erceldoune (Brewer says his real name was Learmouth), or Thomas the Rhymer, as he is often called, does not suffer in any respect upon comparison with that of Chaucer. And yet it belongs to a period a full century earlier. It may be admitted that the language of the Scottish bard is less polished than that which his English successor uses; but this only reflects the greater skill with which the ruder implement is wielded. Chaucer was born about 1340, while the career of Thomas the Rhymer can be traced with certainty not later than 1286. Keeping these dates in mind, we are prepared to judge of Scottish poetry before it could have profited by models from the South. The reader will allow the spelling to be modernized, but otherwise the opening lines of the poem are given according to the Cambridge manuscript.

"As I me went this andyrs day,
Fast on my way making my moan
In a merry morning of May,
By Huntley's banks myself alone,
I heard the jay and the throstèl,
The mavis moanèd in her song,
The woodwale fardé as a bell,
That the wood about me rung."

There are but few words here that require any explanation. The glossary printed by the Early English Text Society gives "bygone" as the meaning of "andyrs" in the first line. "Mavis," in the sixth line, is still used by Scotch writers as the name of a thrush. In the next line the word "fardé" has the meaning, "vociferated." With this help the meaning of the passage will be clear to the reader, who will not fail to

note the easy movement of the verse. There is particularly to be noted throughout the entire poem of seven hundred lines a peculiar lilting, which seems to be secured by introducing one dactyl. The scansion cannot, however, be profitably discussed without going back to the original spelling and observing the accent of the Rhymer's day. The lilting has marked Scotch poetry as compared with English in all the centuries since, and it is one of the beauties of Scotch songs. In connection with this matter of the movement of the verse, it will be observed that the older poet avails himself of alternating rhyme, while Chaucer uses the rhymed couplet. Upon a question of taste such as is presented here, one expresses an opinion only at a risk; and yet the writer ventures to say that he likes the older form the better.

The reader may have patience even to compare this introduction with that of Chaucer's in matter as well as in form. The latter is the longer, in keeping with the scope of the poet's plan. Both introduce us to an English spring. The Rhymer does this by the particular mention of four of his favorite songsters. Two of these he characterizes. This special attention is familiar and affectionate. It speaks well for the heart and for the taste of Thomas. A man is known by the company he keeps. We thank the poet for this glimpse of his social life. He had, we know, good friends and cheerful converse. Did he get that lilt of his, I wonder, from the "woodwale," or woodlark?

Chaucer, too, had his friendships with the birds, as every poet has, but he does not specify his favorites. He presents them in a general way, and he does this in one of the daintiest couplets ever written by him or by any poet, —

"And smalë fowlës maken melodie,
That slepen all the night with open eye."

In choosing spring as the season in which they would have their stories begin, the two poets are agreed. There is peculiar fitness in Thomas's having his poem open with a warm, life-like touch of nature, since his narrative is so soon to take him into supernatural scenes and events.

We have come now to the subject-matter itself of the old Scotch poem. It is of the nature of prophecy. It deals with affairs of the future as revealed through some medium of magic. As Homer sends his hero to Tiresias in the under-world for a knowledge of the future, and as Virgil brings about an interview between Æneas and the shade of his dead father for a similar purpose, so Thomas finds occasion to bring in supernatural agencies. These differ essentially, however, from the Greek and Roman ideas of intelligence beyond that which is shared by mortals. These agencies are the "good people" of the land of fairy. They hold so large a place in our literature that it would be of interest to discover their original forms. This is too much to be hoped for now. The notions long ago prevalent in northern Europe have become too greatly confused ever to be reduced to simple ideas again. But the farther back our reading runs, the clearer view we get of that mystical land between the evening and the morning light. The Rhymer, as we shall see, leads to a vista which later poets have failed to rediscover.

The plan of the prophecy is easily unfolded, but it shows the invention of the poet to be not unequal to his skill in versification. The difficulty of following him to the Land of Faërie is not less to make out

whether he is in the body or out of the body than to find in what direction he goes. It begins as a revery:

"All in a longing as I lay
Underneath a comely tree,
Saw I where a lady gay
Came riding over a lovely lea."

After declaring his inability to describe this lady, even though his tongue were to "wrobble and wrye" [wriggle and twist] until doomsday, he goes on, for about seventy-five lines, to give an account of her apparel, her horse and its trappings, her greyhounds in leash, and dogs running by her side.

This description breaks the continuity of the story, so that when the narrative is resumed it is in the third person.

"Thomas lay and saw that sight,
Underneath a seemly tree;
He said, 'Yond is Mary of might,
That bare the Child that died for me.'"

Instantly he forms the purpose of speaking with the lady, and agrees to meet her at "eldryne tree."

"He kneelèd down upon his knee,
Underneath the greenwood spray;
'Lovely lady! thou rue on me,
Queen of heaven, as thou well may!'
Then spake that lady, mild of thought,
'Thomas, let such wordès be;
For queen of heaven am I not,—
I took never so high degree.
But I am a lady of another countree,
If I be apparelled most of price,
I ride after the wild fee [cattle],
My raches [dogs] run at my device.'"

The Rhymer comes under the magical power of this strange lady, who says to him,—

"'Take thy leave, Thomas, at [of] sun and noon,
And also at leaves of eldryne tree;
This twelvemonth shalt thou with me gone,
That middle earth thou shalt not see.'
He kneeled down upon his knee,
To Mary mild he made his moan:
'Lady! but thou rue on me,
All my games from me are gone.'"

This petition was addressed to the Virgin Mary, but it availed nothing. The "lady gay" becomes his guide.

"She led him to the eldryn hill,
Underneath the greenwood lea,
Where it was dark as any hell,
And ever water till the knee."

For three days he heard only the noise of the flood, when, overcome by hunger, he was led into a "fair arbor," where were growing pears and apples, dates and figs. In this arbor the nightingales were building, the popinjays were flitting about, and

"The throstle song would have no rest."

Thomas pressed to pluck the fruit with his hand, when the lady interposed with, —

"'If thou pull, thee sooth to say,
Thy soul goeth to the fire of hell;
It comes never out till doomsday,
But there ever in pain to dwell.'"

There seems to be in this a reminiscence of Paradise and of the forbidden fruit; but the sequel shows that this "arbor" was wholly an invention of the poet. The lady calls Thomas to lay his head upon her knee, and she will describe to him all the region into which they come.

"He laid his head as she him bade;
His head upon her knee he laid,
Her to please he was full glad,
And then that lady to him she said, —
'Seest thou now yon fair way
That liest over yonder mountain?
Yonder is the way to heaven for aye,
When sinful souls have 'dured their pain.

"'Seest thou now, Thomas, yonder way
That lieth low beneath yon rise?
Yonder is the way, the sooth to say,
Into the joys of Paradise.
Seest thou yet yon third way
That lieth over yonder plain?
Yonder is the way, the sooth to say,
Where sinful souls shall drye [endure] their pain.

"'Seest thou now yonder fourth way,
That lieth over yonder fell?
Yonder is the way, the sooth to say,
Unto the burning fire of hell.'"

There is, no doubt, some connection between these four ways and the four cardinal points of the compass. The Roman *flamen* divided the heavens into four parts for purposes of divination, and this strange gramerie of the North had an origin somewhere in common with that practice. Where Thomas and the lady were at this time does not appear; but from what followed we infer that it is not in the middle earth, — that Midgard of the Scandinavians, the hyperborean residence of their gods; they are within sight of the lady's abode.

"'Seest thou now yonder fair castel
That standeth upon yonder fair hill?
Of town and tower it beareth the bell;
In middle earth is not like there-till.
In faith, Thomas, yonder is mine own
And the king's of this countrie.'".

As the castle belongs to her and to the king, it becomes plain that the lady is the queen of the land of faërie. She proposes to go on in advance of Thomas, and he is to follow, as we see from the directions given him.

"'When thou comest to yon castle gay,
I pray thee courteous man to be;
And whatso any to thee say,
Look thou answer none but me.'"

Upon the arrival of the lady at her castle, Thomas is with her again.

"Into a hall soothly she went,
Thomas followed at her hand;
Ladies came both fair and great
Full courteously to her kneeling."

The music and dancing are described in full; also the preparation for a banquet. How short seemed the time of his stay to the Rhymer we see from what he says of his being sent home upon the coming of a "foul fiend of hell." His tarry seemed to have been for only three days, whereas it had been for seven years.

"There was revel, game and play,
More than I you say pardé,
Till it fell upon a day,
My lovely lady said to me:
'Busk thee, Thomas, for thou must gone,
For here no longer mayest thou be;
Hie thee fast, with mode and moan,
I shall thee bring to eldryn tree.'
Thomas answered with heavy cheer,
'Lovely lady, thou let me be;
For certainly I have been here
But the space of dayès three.'
'Forsooth, Thomas, I thee tell,
Thou hast been here seven year and more;
For here no longer may thou dwell,
I shall tell thee the skill wherefore.'"

After telling the Rhymer of the coming of the fiend who —

> "'Amang this folke will feche his fee,'
> She brought him again to eldryn tree,
> Underneath the greenwood spray;
> On Huntley banks as merry to be,
> Where fowles sing both night and day."

This brings the poet back to the very spot which he left only seven years before, and ends the first "fytte," as it is called. All this invention serves only as an introduction. How he gained the gift of prophecy is next told. The lady turns away from Huntley banks.

> "'Farewell, Thomas, I wend my way;
> I may no longer stand with thee!'
> 'Give me some token, lady gay,
> That I may say I spake with thee!'"

She promises him that he shall always speak the truth, and begs that he will speak no ill of her. Then she turns again to leave him.

> "'Farewell, Thomas, and well thou be,
> I can no longer stand thee by.'
> 'Lovely lady, fair and free,
> Tell me yet of some ferlie!'"

This last request for "ferlie" [fairy lore] calls out not only some explanation of what faërie is, but also many prophecies relating to the future fortunes of Scotland, chiefly in its wars. These constitute the body of the poem. They are of little interest now, but their popularity through many centuries is, no doubt, the one circumstance to which we owe the preservation of a poem of singular beauty in its conception and

language. Those early notions of fairy land were strikingly distinct. It was this wonderful fulness and exactness of conception which gave the belief the strong hold it had, and has always kept, upon the imaginations of the people.

II.

JOHN BARBOUR.

1316?–1395.

THIS Scotch poet belongs to the same period as Chaucer, — the latter half of the fourteenth century. Although the date of his birth is not known, yet we do know that he died an old man in 1395, just five years earlier than his famous English contemporary. This association in time, but separation in place, makes a comparison of the work of these two poets especially interesting to the student of our language. The English poet wrote for London readers; the Scotch bard used the language which was familiar to the men about him at Aberdeen. Their writings afford us specimens of English from the extremities of its domain. It is to be regretted that we have not a manuscript copy of Barbour bearing an earlier date than 1478. This matters less, however, since the variations were likely to be chiefly in the spelling of the words. Copyists are always held more closely to the vocabulary of the original in making a transcript of poetry than in copying prose. Any variation from the original is apt to affect the rhythm.

Under the strange disguises of various spellings, it is really wonderful how large a proportion of Barbour's words are easily recognizable as in good and common use to-day. The meaning or the application may have changed from what it was in Scotland five hundred

years ago, but the words themselves are parts of living English. A good example of this vitality is Barbour's frequent use of the phrase "in hy," meaning "in haste." The connection is easily made, however, just as soon as we recall that the verb "to hie," meaning "to hasten," still in good use in English everywhere, is nothing other than the verbal use of Barbour's noun "hy," haste. Making allowance, then, for the wayward spelling of the poet, which sometimes gives us four distinct forms for a single word, and which, in other instances, makes one form answer for four distinct words, it is not a little surprising to find a larger percentage of Barbour's words than of Chaucer's living in our speech at the present day. While upon this point of spelling, it may be remarked in a general way that the variations were largely in the vowels, and that the tendency here was towards the more open. The vowel "a" predominates. This appears from the use of "ma" instead of "mo," of which we have the comparative form "more." The same word "ma" is used for the auxiliary "may;" and very often it is found used for our word "make."

Going back now to the circumstance that Barbour's vocabulary is more purely English than that of Chaucer, this may be accounted for partly on the ground that French was at that time in quite common use in England, as it had been from the time of the Conqueror, while in Scotland French does not appear to have become fashionable before the days of Mary Stuart. Still further may the fact be accounted for on the ground that Chaucer borrowed much of his material from foreign sources, chiefly from French and Italian writers; and his work partook more or less of the character of translation, where the translator allows

his original to dominate his speech as well as his thought, while on the other hand Barbour told at first-hand the story of the patriotism and the valor of his own countrymen.

Again, we may compare the language of this Northern poet with that of Thomas of Erceldoune, and we shall find results unexpected to many. Barbour was well acquainted with the works of the Rhymer, for he refers to one of his prophecies, —

> "I hope that Thomas' prophecy
> Of Erceldoune shall [verray] be
> In him; for, so Our Lord help me!
> I have great hope he shall be king,
> And have this land all in leading."

This Thomas was a Lowland Scotch poet of just about one hundred years earlier date than Barbour. What will strike the reader of these two poets is the fact that so far as the forms of words are concerned and their construction, the earlier writer is the one who conforms the more nearly to the use of English in our own time. The conclusion to which this discovery naturally and inevitably leads us is that dialect, in English at any rate, is a matter of place rather than of time; it is local, not temporal.

This almost necessitates a remark upon the growing use of the phrase, "Middle English." It has been brought in, no doubt, in imitation of such phrases as "Middle High-German," and so on. To the view presented above, "Middle English" ought to signify the dialect spoken in the midland counties, where was formerly the kingdom of Mercia. Another point not to be overlooked here is the recent usage of speaking of translations from early English into the English of our day. The pretentiousness of such talk is not easy

to be borne. Barbour is properly classed with early English writers; but in his case very little is needed to make him intelligible to modern readers except to change his spelling. Speaking for myself, I can only say that when I read this fourteenth-century poet, the pleasure he gives me awakens a regret that I have not trained myself to the use of English as pure as his.

Barbour is known by his romantic story of "Robert Bruce," — a poem of nearly fourteen thousand verses. That he did not intend this for strictly accurate history, is evident from what he says in the first book, —

> "Lordings who likis for to hear,
> The romance now begynnys here."

To show his method of treatment, the interview between Bruce and the goodwife of the house to which he came in expectation of finding there James Douglas and Sir Edward Bruce, is here cited, —

> "She asked him soon what he was,
> And whence he came, and where he goes.
> 'A travelling man, dame,' said he,
> 'That travels here through the country.'
> She said, 'All that travelling are,
> For sake of one, are welcome here.'
> The king said, 'Good dame, what is he
> That gars [makes] you have such specialty
> To men that travel?' 'Sir, perfay,'
> Quoth the good wife, 'I will you say;
> Good king Robert the Bruce is he,
> That is right lord of this country.
> His foes him holdis now in throng,
> But I think to see before ought long
> Him lord and king o'er all the land,
> That no foes him shall withstand.'
> 'Dame, lovest thou him so well?' said he.
> 'Yea, sir,' she said, 'so God me see.'
> 'Dame,' said he, 'lo! him here thee by,
> For I am he.' 'Say ye soothly?'

'Yea, certes, dame.' 'And where are gone
Your men, when ye are thus alone?'
'At this time, dame, I have no ma [more].'
She said, 'It may no wise be swa [so];
I have two sons wight and hardy,
They shall become your men in hy [haste].'
As she devisèd, they have done;
His sworn men become they soon.
The wife gart [made] soon him sit and eat,
But he had short while at the meat
Sitting, when he heard great stamping
About the house; then, but letting [without waiting],
They start up, the house to defend;
But soon after the king has kenned
James of Douglas; then was he blithe,
And bade open the doors swith [quickly],
And they come in, all that they were,
Sir Edward the Bruce was there."

This is the true romantic style of narrative. Barbour is writing in 1378 of what took place in 1307. He enters into particulars such as an eye-witness would scarcely be expected to notice and report. By presenting the parties to this interview in their own proper characters, the poet secures a good degree of dramatic interest. The poem sacrifices all elements of an epic character to the narrative form. It takes in the history of forty-six years, — the period between 1286 and 1332. The interest is therefore centred in its hero rather than in any single exploit of his. Although the account of this period is sufficiently true to the facts in the case, yet the truthfulness of the poem is mainly that element which holds it in sympathy with the spirit of the age.

The reader of Barbour will not fail to see how greatly Sir Walter Scott was indebted to this early work, not only for material, — which the later poet acknowledges repeatedly — but even more, we can

believe, for the artistic handling of his subject. In the mere matter of metre, the eight-syllabled verse of Barbour furnishes the basis of all Scott's romantic measures. But more than all else to the later poet was the spirit which he imbibed from his early master. Barbour proved that romanticism could live through the fierce contentions of the Crusades, and even thrive from the fervor of religious enthusiasm; Scott showed that the earnest, single-minded purpose of the Reformation was no more unfriendly to that apparently alien spirit. It remains for those who are curious in such matters to observe how romanticism fares at the hands of the practical philistinism of to-day.

Barbour is at his best — as no doubt every poet is at his best — when roused by some strong and worthy feeling. The passage in which he describes the condition of the Scotch people under Edward I. of England, and his reflections upon that point, is one of the best-known parts of the whole poem, —

> "Alas! that folk that ever was free,
> And in freedom wont for to be,
> Through their great mischance and folly
> Were treated then so wickedly
> That their foes their judges were;
> What wretchedness may man have more!
> Ah, freedom is a noble thing!
> Freedom makes man to have liking;
> Freedom all solace to man gives;
> He lives at ease that freely lives!
> A noble heart may have none ease,
> Nor ellys [else] nought that may him please,
> If freedom fall; for free liking
> Is yearnèd o'er all other things."

The allusions to outward Nature are not very frequent in Barbour, but when they do occur they remind us strongly of Chaucer. The feeling of those early

poets for the beauty about them was something genuine. It amounts to a sympathy so close and true as to lead to confidences on the part of Nature such as a less worthy generation of poets is not often permitted to share. The following will show how easily and naturally the moral character in the elements unfolded itself to the poet's view : —

"This was in ver [spring], when winter tide
With his blastis, hideous to bide,
Was overdriven, and birdis small,
As throstel and the nightingale,
Began right merrily to sing
And for to make in their singing
Sundry notes and soundis sere [various],
And melody pleasant to hear;
And the trees began to ma [make]
Bourgeons [buds] and bright blooms alswa [also],
To win the healing of their hevede [head],
That wicked winter had them revede [reft];
And all groves began to spring.
Into that time the noble king," etc.

The humor of Barbour is pure Scotch. The exhibitions of it are few, chiefly in cutting repartee, and it shows grim whenever it does appear. A good example of it occurs near the end of the poem. After the death of Bruce, Douglas visits Seville in Spain. Here he receives the Spanish knights, who are attracted by his fame. One of these prided himself upon having his face all covered over with scars received in combat. The interview with Douglas was not a lengthy one, —

"Ere he the Lord Douglas had seen,
He weened [thought] his face had wounded been,
But never a hurt in it had he.
When he unwounded can [did] it see,
He said that he had great ferly [wonder]
That such a knight and so worthy,

And prizèd of so great bounty,
Might in the face unwounded be.
And he [Douglas] answered thereto meekly
And said, 'Love [praise] God, all time had I
Handis my head for to guard.'"

Long as is "The Bruce," there are points where the poet excuses himself from admitting matters that would properly come within the scope of his poem. One of these occasions is where he leaves a fuller account of the exploits of Douglas to the song-writers of his day:

"I will not rehearse all the manner;
For whoso likis, they may hear
Young women, when they will play,
Sing it among them ilke [every] day."

It shows a fine literary sense in Barbour that he omitted from his semi-historical narration those matters that were better suited to lyric treatment, since his unvarying measure must have suffered from comparison with the lilting songs of the Scottish maidens. That competition was not to be dreaded by Scott, and he was comparatively free to introduce lyric passages of great variety into poems similar to "The Bruce."

III.

WILLIAM LANGLAND.

1332?–1400?

BY a singular mistake on the part of his readers, Langland has not infrequently been confounded with the leading character in his poem. It is pretty clear that they fell into the error in this way: The title to the poem was "Vision de Piers Plowman." Readers took the *de* to be French, and read the title "Vision of Piers Plowman." The work is commonly so spoken of to this day. A reading of it will quickly show that the *de* of the title is Latin, and that the poem is the "Vision concerning Piers the Plowman." The most superficial examination of the work will make plain the fact that Latin quotations are to be met there at least ten times as often as French.

One circumstance made this mistake in identity easy and natural, and that was the immediate popularity of the "Vision." Piers Plowman became at once a reality with the people. "Pierce the Plowman's Crede" appeared as early as 1394, and "The Plowman's Tale" about a year later. The real author of these is not known; but that he took "Piers the Plowman" for his pseudonym proves that the name had become a household term in England.

The "Vision concerning Piers the Plowman" is classed with "Early English" literature. It belongs to

the same period as the "Canterbury Tales" of Chaucer, and is read with about the same ease or difficulty as that work, according as the reader has or has not made a study of our fourteenth-century writers. For it is not to be disputed that English of that period does require special study; it is only insisted upon here that the amount of study is not excessive, and that it is not unrewarded.

The precise date of Langland's birth is not known, nor is that of his death. Mr. Skeat places the date of his birth as early as 1332, and that of his death as late as 1400. The years of his life devoted to writing are more nearly made out from allusions to well-known events. He was certainly engaged upon the "Vision" as early as 1362, and he continued to revise, transcribe, and expand this work until 1393. Another work of his, "Richard the Redeles," — that is, "Richard Lacking Counsel," — was completed as late as 1399. In this the author speaks of himself as an old man, and it is reasonable to conclude that his task was then finished.

That Langland and Chaucer chanced to be writing at the same time, very naturally leads to a comparison of their work. In this there is little, except the language, in common. The two men belonged to two different classes, and classes were very wide apart in those days. We can easily set these authors in their proper social relation. Chaucer's wife was a sister-in-law of John of Gaunt, whose London palace was burned by the insurgents under Wat Tyler in 1381, at the very time when John Ball, their chaplain, was urging Piers Plowman to keep to his work. Chaucer was the genial story-teller to whose view the world was an easy-going one. His several characters are

distinguished by some one highly cultivated virtue, which is exhibited under any and all circumstances. The England which he paints for us is a "merrie England" indeed, if only it is what he represents it. Langland's method is quite different. He shows us men and women all imperfect; the best are none too good, the worst not altogether bad. The world as he sees it in his "Vision" is a real one, but it is a hard one.

Of Langland himself we get but faint glimpses in the "Vision." In the sixth *passus*, or canto, he says, —

> "And I live in London and on London both;
> The looms that I labor with, and livelihood deserve,
> Is *Pater noster* and my primer, *placebo* and *dirige*,
> And my psalter some time, and my seven psalms.
> Thus I sing for their souls of such as me helpen,
> And those that find me my food vouchen safe, I trow,
> To be welcome when I come."

From this and other passages it is plain that the author was a clergyman in orders. The same conclusion would be inferred from his familiarity with the Scriptures, which he quotes in the Latin Vulgate. Mr. Skeat supposes him to have been one of a great number of priests who flocked to London after the plague, and who gained a livelihood by saying masses for the souls of the dead. This is perfectly reasonable; but I cannot discover that the poem echoes the tone of the city. Skeat is quite positive on this point. He says:

"It is clear, both from very numerous allusions and from the whole tone of the poem, that the place which the poet knew best and most delighted to describe was the city of London. It cannot be too strongly impressed upon the reader (especially as the point has often been overlooked) that one great merit of the poem consists in its exhibition of London life and London opinions; and that to remember the London origin of at any rate the

larger portion of the poem is the true key to the right understanding of it."

This is looking at the poem from one point of view. If we look at it from the country side we shall find quite as much evidence that the author was at some time of his life familiar with rustic scenes. Here are some portions of the ninth *passus* modernized, —

"'Then,' said Perkin Ploughman, 'by Saint Peter of Rome,
I have a half acre to plough by the highway.
Had I ploughed that half-acre and sowed it after,
I would wend with you and the way teach.'
'That were a long waiting,' quoth a lady in a chair;
'What should we women work the whiles?'
'I pray you, for your profit,' quoth Piers to the ladies,
'That some sew the sack for shedding of the wheat.'
. . . . . .
'Wives and widows wool and flax spinneth;
Conscience counselleth you cloth for to make
For profit of the poor and pleasure of yourselves.'
. . . . . .
'I shall apparel me,' quoth Perkin, 'in pilgrim's wise,
And wend with all those that live in truth.'
He cast on him his clothes of all kind of crafts,
His gaiters and his cuffs, as native wit him taught,
And hung his hopper on his neck instead of a scrip;
A bushel of bread-corn brought was therein.
'For I will sow it myself, and then will I wend
To pilgrimages, as palmers do, pardon to win.
My plough-foot shall be my pike-staff, and pick in two the roots,
And help my coulter to carve and cleanse the furrows.
And all that help me to plough or else to weed
Shall have leave, by our Lord, to go and glean after.'"

This is quite enough to show that Langland must have been acquainted with life in country homes and in the fields. Not only is Piers the typical husbandman of his time, but his household were bred in puritanic ways. Their names will suggest a usage continued down into our colonial days, —

"Dame Work-when-time-is Piers' wife hight;
His daughter hight Do-right-so-or-thy-dame-shall-thee-beat;
His son hight Suffer-thy-sovereign-have-their-will."

These descriptive names are sufficiently picturesque, but the life they outline is a hard-visaged phantom.

Langland's acquaintance with literature was not limited to the sacred writers, although his allusions are too indefinite to help much in tracing the course of his studies. These lines from the thirteenth *passus* are a sample, —

"Many proverbs I might have of many holy saints
To testify for truth the tale that I show,
And poets to prove it. Porphyry and Plato,
Aristotle, Ovid, and eleven hundred,
Tully, Ptolemy, — I cannot tell their names, —
Prove patient poverty prince of all virtues."

He was, moreover, well read in the civil and statute law, as well as in the ecclesiastical. The following lines are to the point: —

"For may no churl a charter make nor his chattel sell
Without leave of the lord; no law would it grant."

The work as a whole gives a favorable impression of the acquirements possible in the fourteenth century.

The poem is wholly allegorical, as much so as Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." All the "Vision" appears in dreams. Some of its machinery is borrowed from the earlier moralities and mysteries. In his first dream the poet finds himself in a wilderness, — the universe, — with power to survey a large part of it. On the east side he beholds a tower, the abode of Truth; that is, of God. To the west is a deep dale, the abode of Death and of wicked spirits, and on the north is Lucifer, —

"He was an archangel of heaven, one of God's knights;
He and other with him that held nought with Truth,
Leaped out in loathly form for his false will;
He had lust to be like his Lord God Almighty.
Lord! why would he thus, that wretched Lucifer,
[Rather] leap aloft, in the north side,
[Than] sit on the sun's side, where the day roweth?"

Those who exhibited the old moralities are said to have set Belial upon a scaffold on the north side of the open space where the spectators were gathered; this was taken as a matter of fact (Isaiah xiv. 13). As showing the persistence of the most conventional and the most conservative of all the arts, we find in "Paradise Lost," book v., —

"Which having passed,
At length into the limits of the north
They came, and *Satan* to his royal seat."

Antiquated as is the manner and language of Langland on the whole, there are times when he seems just to have come in off the street. Speaking of faith without works, he says, —

"For James the Gentile [judgeth] in his books
That faith without works is feebler than nought,
And dead as a door-nail."

In his confession of the seven deadly sins, a vein of sarcasm shows rich wherever it comes to the surface:

"'I am ever sorry,' said Envy,
'I am but seldom other.'"

Speaking of men of his own order, he says, —

"They cannot out creep,
So hard hath avarice hasped them together."

Holy Church points out a castle in his dream, —

"That is the castle of Care; whoso cometh therein
May ban that he born was, in body and in soul;

Therein woneth a wight, that Wrong is his name,
Father of Falsehood founded it first of all;
Adam and Eve he egged to do ill."

By giving Langland's lines a form sufficiently modern to suit the eye of the general reader, much mischief has been done the construction of his verse. It will be seen, however, that it is alliterative, like the old Saxon verse, and somewhat rhythmical, but wholly lacking rhyme. The lines describing the fall of the rebel angels require little change, —

"In wonderwise holy writ telleth how they fallen;
Some in earth, some in air, some in hell deep,
But Lucifer lowest lieth of them all;
For pride that him poked."

There are few allusions to passing events in the poem, but enough to show that the age was not unfamiliar with politics in the pulpit. There is a passage in the fourth *passus* which is highly characteristic of the poet's manner, —

"Caitiff-like, thou, Conscience, counseledst the king to let
In his enemy's hand this heritage of France.
Uncunning is that conscience, a kingdom to sell,
That is conquered through common help; a kingdom or duchy
May not be sold soothly, so many their part ask
Of folk that fought therefor and followed the king's will."

It has been supposed that Langland belonged to the Lollards, or Reformers, of his day; but he seems to me rather to have been of those who believed in reform within the Church, and to have clung to her communion. Laboring to the end that he might work this internal reform, he was not likely to favor the popular uprising of 1381, and his silence with regard to the events of that time is sufficiently accounted for. His

mention of the Lollards in connection with the "lollers" [idlers] at the beginning of the sixth *passus*, strikes me as an instance of his good-humored bantering, where he does not spare himself, that he may have a laugh at the expense of some of his zealous companions. Before one has finished the book he will find a good many innuendoes lurking under some word or phrase. The poet was certainly of the *Puritan* type, but I cannot make out that he was a *Separatist*.

IV.

JOHN BALL.

—— – 1381.

VERY slender would be the claims of John Ball to recognition as a man of letters if this claim rested solely upon the few fragments of his work which have come to our hands. Bare specimens even of his style and manner are to be gathered only from the out-of-the-way chronicles of his remote time. We can, however, find enough of his bold and honest speech that, taken in connection with the commentary of his life and death, proves him to have been the earliest advocate of labor reform in England. Stephen Langton, who lived nearly a century earlier than Ball, has been honored as a champion of freedom; but it was rather ecclesiastical than political and civil freedom for which Langton contended. Again, Langton was a highly accomplished scholar, and all his life long he moved in the highest social circles. He did not, like Ball, identify himself in sympathy and interest with the humblest and feeblest ranks of a feudal community. Pretty nearly the same may be said of Wyclif, whose name is among the earliest and most conspicuous of the list of English Reformers. Wyclif aimed directly at the spiritual and intellectual liberty of the people. Ball, who followed close upon the Reformer's time, aimed just as directly at breaking the fetters of distinc-

tions of caste and wealth and privilege and worth in which the masses of the English people were kept, by custom and usage, if not by statute and common law, in a condition of absolute bondage. We find almost as striking a contrast between Ball and Langland, the author of the "Vision of Piers Plowman," who was his contemporary, and with whose writings he was perfectly familiar. Langland had genius and courage to inveigh against the priesthood and to vindicate English rights against Romish invasion; but he lacked the nerve — or was it the wisdom? — to lay the issue between labor, crushed under the burdens of taxation, of military and feudal service, of civil disability, and of social contempt, and that party of the second part theretofore claiming the right to lord it over the serfs as kings were divinely appointed over themselves.

Ball had the courage and the ability to initiate a movement which finally brought the villein and the baron into the field, not as knight and retainer, but in hostile ranks. The Peasant War, as it is called, of 1381 had its antecedent causes like any other similar event. The chief promoter could not have been Wat Tyler, whose tragic death has made him the popular hero of the war. A hundred thousand laborers would not have appeared at Southwark from the eastern shires so suddenly as to overawe the English Government unless a great amount of preparatory work had been done. It was this work that Ball had been engaged at for more than twenty years. As a local preacher he had ministered to many communities in the east of England. Froissart speaks of him as "a mad priest of Kent;" but at the time of the outbreak his curacy was at Colchester, in Essex, and his lodging in the prison at Maidstone. He had previously been settled at

York, as his own letters show. These were important places in that day, and make it certain that Ball was a man of note. This estimate of his importance is supported by the fact that after his trial and condemnation the Bishop of London got a stay of proceedings to try and convert him from his heresies. It makes plain also on what grounds Froissart thought him insane.

In espousing the cause of the villeins against the barons in temporal affairs, Ball became the prototype of the Socialistic agitators of the present time. More than that, he gave the keynote to strains that are among the most pathetic in modern literature. Any one who cares to discover the capabilities of these themes to stir the soul will find their full power in "The Cry of the Children," by Mrs. Browning. It is not easy to realize the extent to which "the short and simple annals of the poor" have enriched our literature and our modern life.

William Morris's "Dream of John Ball" presents a striking picture of the man and his times, seen through a highly poetic atmosphere. The dreamer has no doubt "pondered all these things, and how men fight and lose the battle; and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes, turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name." The poet is a kindred spirit with the old Reformer, and he strives, with all the energy of his sturdy and stubbornly obstinate individuality, to secure for mankind "the blessing of the Fellowship."

The fullest account of Ball will be found in the second volume of Mr. C. E. Maurice's "English Popular Leaders;" but a more ready source of information is Mr. Green's "Short History of the English People."

Green seems to favor the opinion that Ball was the author, not only of the popular rhymes that went in his own name, but also those that went in the name of "Jack the Miller," "Jack the Carter," and "Jack Trewman." These have so much of form and sentiment alike as to make the opinion that they are of a common origin perfectly reasonable. Upon this point the curious may consult the "General Preface" to Mr. Skeat's edition of "The Vision of Piers the Plowman," where it is assumed that these are distinct personages. Green gives these specimens of the peculiar alliteration and rhyme of these compositions; they resemble closely the work of Langland, and they continued in favor down to the time of John Skelton, in the sixteenth century: —

"John Ball
Greeteth you all,
And doth for to understand
He hath rung your bell.
Now right and might,
Will and skill,
God speed every dele."

"*Help truth, and truth shall help you!*
Now reigneth pride in price,
And covetise
Is counted wise,
And lechery withouten shame,
And gluttony withouten blame.
Envy reigneth with treason,
And sloth is taken in great season.
God do bote,
For now is tyme!"

"*Jack Miller asketh help to turn his mill aright.*
He hath grounden
Small, small.
The King's Son of Heaven

He shall pay for all.
Look thy mill go aright
With the four sailes,
And the post stand
With steadfastness,
With right and with might,
With skill and with will;
Let might help right,
And skill go before will,
And right before might,
So goeth our mill aright."

"Jakke Trewman doth you to understonde
That falseness and gyle have reigned so long,
And trewth hath been set under a lock,
And falseness and gyle reigneth in every flock.
No man may come trewth to
But if he sing *Si dedero.*"

The Latin words with which Jack Trueman ends are supposed to be taken from some monkish hymn. The several passages contain allusions which are now obscure. We can see, however, that allegory abounds much as it does in Bunyan. The English never outgrow a fondness for personification carried just far enough to present images in shadowy outline. How much like Poor Richard's wisdom sounds the verse, "Help truth, and truth shall help you!" The power of such speeches to lay hold upon the understanding and the conscience does not lie wholly in their pithy conciseness. They bring us to the subject as by a personal introduction. Ball understood this art of putting things, and his methods have not been improved upon. He is said to have reduced the political doctrine to the couplet, —

"When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?"

This furnished the premises for his reasoning; any man's logic could draw the conclusions. What he insisted upon was the fact that all men were equal before God, and that sound reason as well as public policy required that they be equal before the laws.

There is good ground for believing that Ball has been vilified and maligned in the history of his time. That the rising of the peasants were attended with so little disorder and crime as it was, and that the insurgents never wavered in their loyalty to the king, proves that a strong moral force was exerted in behalf of law and order. If we look for this controlling power we cannot discover a more likely source than the counsel of a beloved and respected chaplain who had for years been the pastor of their homes and churches. Again, the fact of his identifying himself with an unsuccessful movement was ample reason for giving him the epithets of "mad priest," "strolling preacher," and others as little complimentary. In history, as in war, the cry is *Væ victis!* Successful iniquity engenders a sort of contagion of falsehood. As M. de Vericour puts the case, "there seems to be in the essence of humanity a base tendency to justify triumphant brute force, and to condemn without investigation whatever has submitted to defeat."

The following letter of Ball's is reported as having been given in evidence against the writer of it at his trial. It is also regarded by some as proof that sundry other Johns mentioned are the same as have been quoted before, and are all different persons from Ball. But that he in this letter names himself John Schep, — that is, Shepherd, — is a circumstance not to be overlooked.

"John Schep, sometyme seynt Marie prest of York, and nowe of Colchestre, greteth well Johan Nameles and Johan the Mullere and Johan Cartere, and biddeth hem that thei ware of gyle in borugh, and standeth togidder in Goddis name, and biddeth Piers Plowman go to his werke and chastise welle Hobbe the robber, and taketh with you Johan Trewman and all his felaws and no mo, and loke schape you to on heved and no mo."

This letter is a good specimen of the English of 1381. Surnames were by no means fixed at that time. They were being adopted among the lower classes usually from the occupation of the individual. There was no certainty, for instance, that John Carter belonged to a family that bore the name Carter, only that occupations were to some degree hereditary. Ball would no more hesitate to write under the name of Miller, Carter, or Trewman, if he appeared in such a character, than under the name of Shepherd. No hard and fast rules of interpretation can be applied in such cases. There is enough in the fragments of writing left and in the testimony of events to prove that there was at least one generous-hearted friend of the poor among the clergy of that day.

V.

HENRY BRADSHAW.

1450–1513.

FROM the end of the sixth century to the time when our literature began to take on its distinctive form, near the close of the fourteenth century, the life of England was essentially a religious life. The former date is marked by the arrival of Augustine from Rome as a missionary of the Romish Church. The teachings of that Church dominated the life and thought of England through all that period. We could but infer as much, even if no record of the fact remained to us. The spirit of the Crusades was not the zeal born of recent conversion, it was the accumulated thought and desire of successive generations crystallized into a fixed purpose.

But we are not left to conjecture alone on this point. There is a mass of documentary evidence as well as an abundance of tradition relating to this subject. The personal history of men and of women who were eminent for their Christian lives and virtues were the favorite subjects upon which the writers of the time were principally engaged. Monks were the chroniclers and journalists of that age. It is fair to assume that the quantity and the quality of their work were regulated according to the law of supply and demand. We may safely conclude that these worthy

lives of worthy personages constituted the popular literature of those centuries.

The influence of these precursors of Chaucer, Langland, and the other writers of prose and of verse who had a part in giving our literature its modern form, is sufficiently plain in most Early English works. We discover it in the good-natured bantering of the "Canterbury Tales" and in the severe strictures of the "Creed" and the "Vision of Piers Plowman." Some fragments of that early legendary literature have lived on to the present in the romance of Scott and in the ballads of the poets.

To take up those early Lives of the Saints in their original form would be a task neither easy nor edifying. They were written in the Latinity of the Church and of the period. They are filled with trivialities amounting to little more than the gossip of cloister and refectory. The writers betray a sentiment nearly akin to hero-worship. Each tries to give his subject all the graces of a saintly life and character. The rivalry among different religious orders must be taken into account to explain what readers of the present day can regard only as exaggerated praise. The local interest which attaches to these patrons and patronesses of convents, abbeys, and towns is in many instances by no means the least interesting feature of these spiritual biographies.

We are happily saved the time and the trouble of reading in Latin these records of early English grace and piety. Sufficient of their number have been put into our own tongue to show us what is their quality. Some time in the last years of the fifteenth century and the first years of the sixteenth Henry Bradshaw, himself a monk, put into English verse the legendary

story of Saint Werburge of Chester. Although Bradshaw's English of very nearly four hundred years ago gives the reader an impression of quaintness and remoteness, we must bear in mind that his story goes back to a time nearly seven hundred years earlier. So far, therefore, as incident or remark may reveal anything of life, it is of life in the early morning of England's history.

The Latin life — or "passionary," as it was called — gave Bradshaw but the merest outline of his poetical biography. He modestly calls himself only a translator. His reference to the original work is of interest, —

> "For as declareth the true passionary, —
> A book wherein her holy life written is ;
> Which book remaineth in Chester monastery, —
> I purpose, by help of Jesu, king of bliss,
> In no wise to rehearse any sentence amiss,
> But follow the legend and true history
> After an humble style, and from it little vary"

This stanza may be taken as a specimen of the whole work so far as form is concerned. It is only at rare intervals that an eighth line is added. We know that the measure was popular at the time, for it was used both by Chaucer and by Lydgate. The long lines suited the dignity of the subject. The reader will admit that it becomes a little tiresome when it is continued through more than eight hundred stanzas. It may be well to remark here at the outset that in reading this verse the final syllable is to be heavily toned.

The student of our literature will be gratified to find that this studious recluse, writing the life of a holy personage, claimed companionship with the poets of his time in the fraternity of letters. Sending his

"little book" into the world, he speeds it with this gracious recognition of his fellow-poets, —

> "To all ancient poets, little book, submit thee,
> Whilom flowering in eloquence facundious,
> And to all other which present now be, —
> First to Master Chaucer and Lydgate sententious;
> Also to pregnant Barkley, now being religious;
> To inventive Skelton and poet laureate:
> Pray them all of pardon both early and late."

Bradshaw pays a scarcely less direct compliment to his "maister Chaucer" in the opening stanza of his prologue, —

> "When Phœbus has run his course in Sagittari,
> And Capricorn entered, a retrograte,
> Amidst December the air cold and frosty,
> And pale Lucina the earth did illuminate,
> I rose up shortly from my cubicle preparate
> About midnight, and cast in mine intent
> How I might spend the time convenient."

Comparing this with the first lines of the Prologue to the "Canterbury Tales," we discover that in a very direct sense Chaucer was indeed the master.

After the manner of early historians, the poet enlarges upon the condition of his country at the time of which he writes. —

> "In England there ruled seven kings, doubtless,
> Whose names we purpose to show with license,
> But principally of the kingdom of Mercians."

This old Mercian kingdom, between the Thames and the Humber, was the one to which Saint Werburge belonged. Among so many kingdoms royalty must have been abundant and cheap. We can easily give belief to the statement that this lady was

> "Descended by ancestry and title famous
> Of four mighty kings noble and victorious."

This Werburge must not be confounded with another royal lady of the same name and of about the same time, who joined with her husband Alfred and their daughter Alhdryd in signing a deed of gift to Canterbury Cathedral of what is known as the "Codex Aureus," the "Golden Book." This book is a copy of the four gospels written in letters of gold on one hundred and ninety leaves, alternately of white and a delicate violet hue. The deed of gift is written in the top and bottom margins of the last leaf. This book is now in the Royal Library of Sweden. No date is given to the deed, but it is not at all unlikely that the estimable lady who signed it was named after the saint whom Bradshaw celebrated.

There is introduced into this long poem somewhat of dramatic form. A good example of this is found in that portion where the author tells how Werburge gave spiritual instruction to her sisters of the abbey. There is in this part, as there is elsewhere, implied dialogue. When the abbess comes to speak of her approaching death, she alludes to the universal hope of immortality, in this stanza, —

> "The sweet bird, closed in a cage a long season,
> Gladly entendeth to fly at liberty;
> The prisoner, fettered and cast in deep dungeon,
> Ever supposes to be rid from captivity;
> The soul of mankind most digne of duty,
> Naturally desireth, proved by reason,
> To be delivered from bodily prison."

It is in keeping with the rules of dramatic composition that this plaintive strain be followed by a glad burst of joyful feeling. Precisely this result is brought about by the skill of the author. The gloom which the anticipation of death was calculated to inspire is imme-

diately dispelled by the ecstasy with which the sacrament is received. This passage follows as a lyric chorus follows the culmination of horror in a Greek tragedy: —

> "Welcome, my Lord, welcome my King;
> Welcome, my Sovereign and Saviour;
> Welcome, my Comfort and Joy everlasting,
> My Trust, my Treasure, my Help and Succor;
> Welcome, my Maker and my Redemptor;
> The Son of God, most in majesty,
> Without beginning and endless shall be."

From what has already been given, the reader will have found the verse built somewhat roughly and ruggedly. The rhymes are rarely full rhymes, but are limited to the final syllable. This syllable was no doubt read as a toned syllable. We find such rhymes as "frosty, sagittari;" "marter (martyr), father;" "father, syster;" "syster, daughter;" and so on. Final *ed* was then regularly sounded, as it continues to be in "blessed" and a few other words. The sound of long *i* had not then been developed, as is shown by the rhyming of "shrine" and "virgine," "tyme" and "ruyne," etc. Attending to such matters as these, the reader of Bradshaw will find his verse running much more smoothly than otherwise. Cadence is almost entirely lacking. The variety of forms under which some words appear is due to the many dialects then prevailing in central England.

There are elements in the composition which were popular in Bradshaw's day, but which are apt to be passed over without notice by the modern reader. Alliteration is a matter of course. It is not always the case that instances of this appear in the first syllables of words; they are to be looked for in such combi-

nations as "fortune unfriendly," "conserve and save," "vertue to avaunce." Popular phrases and proverbs, used with a freedom equal to that which marks the style of Chaucer, must have recommended the poem to the favor of the masses. Some of the comparisons are rather strong than elegant. Here is a homely one, redolent of its native English soil. The poet says of the false Werbode that when the devil entered into him, —

"He rored and yelled lyke a wylde bull."

There is plenty of internal evidence like this going to show that Bradshaw wrote for the common people of his day. The poem must have been well suited to their habit of thought, as it was suited to their habit of speech. The purpose of the author is obvious throughout. We cannot doubt the candor or the confidence with which he sent the volume from his hands.

"Go forth, little book, Jesu be thy speed,
And save thee alway from misreporting,
Which art compiled for no clerk indeed,
But for merchant men having little learning,
And that rude people thereby may have knowing
Of this holy virgin and redolent rose,
Which hath been kept full long time in close."

Everywhere in his poem does Bradshaw appear the genial monk, — not, however, wholly unacquainted with the affairs of the world. And yet he was apparently entirely unconscious that anything like doubt or scepticism existed. He tells the miracle of Saint Chad, — that the vestments of the good saint hung suspended on a sunbeam while he who had doffed them was engaged in prayer, — just as though everybody must

needs believe it as a matter of course. There is not in his work a single hint of the deep unrest which at that time disturbed the soul of England. After-events consigned to oblivion the Lives of the Saints, even Bradshaw's Life of Saint Werburge.

VI.

JOHN SKELTON.

1460–1529.

SKELTON is connected, not only in time, but in the whole scope of his literary purpose and accomplishment, with the reign of Henry VIII. He aspired to be court poet to that sovereign, and he regularly signed himself poet laureate. Although this office is not known to have become perpetual until the time of Charles I., when Ben Jonson was appointed, — upon the suggestion, it is said, of the poet himself, — yet there were instances of poets receiving presents from the king, even if they were not pensioned, before the time of Skelton. However the facts in this particular case may have been, we must now content ourselves with the reflection that if Henry VIII. desired to have a poet laureate, Skelton was just about the sort of man for him to bestow the bays upon.

Skelton was educated for the Church, and for a time he was engaged in the duties of the priesthood. From this position he was removed. Whatever may have been the occasion of this removal, his writings show him to have been capable of almost any and every species of unworthiness of the sacred office. It is likely that the loss of his place led him into literature; at any rate, his attacks upon Cardinal Wolsey furnished the motive and the avowed purpose of most of his poems. These are naturally personal in a most pointed manner. Their

author occupies a sort of middle ground, in temper as well as in time, between the incensed but dignified Langland and the intemperately abusive Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's.

The character of Wolsey, as it has been described for us, abounds in contradictions. Shining virtues are offset by shameful vices. Any account of the man must be made up of antitheses. His fortunes, too, offer the same striking contrasts. A youth of assiduous study and effort was followed by a manhood of conspicuous influence in the Church and at court, and this in turn was succeeded by utter ruin and despair. It is not to be forgotten, however, that this character and record have been given to the cardinal by his enemies, and they took great pains to have poetic justice done the man. It ought to weigh much in his favor that he never stooped to deny the charges brought against him. We can easily imagine that Shakspeare does only justice to the character of Wolsey when he represents him as saying to Surrey, —

> "How much methinks I could despise this man,
> But that I am bound in charity against it!"

He could honestly, no doubt, have said this before a host of scurrilous writers, and to Skelton chief among them.

Shakspeare was in a position to estimate the cardinal at his true worth. The character which he has given may be taken as just.

> "He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one; . . .
> And though he were unsatisfied in getting
> (Which was a sin), yet in bestowing, madam,
> He was most princely. Ever witness for him
> Those twins of learning that he raised in you,
> Ipswich and Oxford."

The mention of Ipswich in this connection reminds us of Wolsey's scheme for founding a college there. The town was his birthplace. His princely mind conceived the idea of founding there a monument to his greatness. To this end he obtained from the pope the dissolution of about thirty religious houses, among them the monastery of Ipswich. Their wealth was to be appropriated to the founding of a great institution of learning. One building was erected in 1528, — two years before the cardinal's death. Of this it is said that only one brick gateway is left in ruins on the side towards the river. Like all the rest of Wolsey's lifework, this scheme seems to have proved a failure; but to one who is looking for probable causes for historical events, this easy "appropriation" of Church funds appears to have suggested to Henry VIII. the policy of dissolving all the religious houses throughout the realm and "appropriating" their revenues to uses of the State. The act was one that gained Wolsey enemies and Skelton readers.

The poet adopted for his railing a species of verse which has ever since been known by his name. No one could hope to avoid doggerel while using such a measure. The opening of "Colin Clout" affords a good specimen of the verse. This is Skelton's earliest tirade against the powers that had removed him from his living, and it is more general than subsequent attacks.

"What can it avail
To drive forth a snail,
Or to make a sail
Of a herring's tail;
To rhyme or to rail,
To write or to invite,
Either for delight
Or else for despite;

Or books to compile
Of divers manner style,
Vice to revile
And sin to exile;
To teach or to preach,
As reason will reach?"

And so on for more than twelve hundred lines. It required the genius of Taylor, the water-poet, to show all the capacity for nonsense which this kind of verse could develop. In the hands of Skelton this jingling of rhyme sometimes showed unusual energy of thought. These opening lines indicate his purpose of lashing the Church authorities. We know, from its frequent occurrence in the literature of the time, that the whipping a snail was a proverbial expression for a thankless and unprofitable labor; and from the fact that Skelton had been settled at Norwich, we easily conclude that the making a sail of a herring's tail was a local proverb that would take direct hold of the thought of those East-shore fishermen.

There is little in this poem, or indeed in any of Skelton's writings, relating to the Reformation. The quarrel in which he is engaged is that going on between the laity and the clergy. A few lines near the middle of the piece give a catalogue of prevailing schisms and an idea of the contempt in which some of them were held, —

"And some have a smack
Of Luther's sack,
And a burning spark
Of Luther's work,
And are somewhat suspect
In Luther's sect;
And some of them bark,
Clatter, and carp

Of that heresy art
Called Wickliffista,
The devilish dogmatista;
And some be Hussians,
And some be Arians,
And some be Pelagians,
And make much variance
Between the clergy
And the temporality, —
How the Church hath too mickel,
And they have too little."

The matters in dispute at that time related chiefly to the revenues, privileges, and preferments of the Church. When Henry VIII. put an end to all this contention by promptly "appropriating" all worldly possessions of religious houses, then points of doctrine came under discussion as they had never been discussed before.

Mild as Skelton was in this book, he complains near the end that he could not have it printed because of the offence it had given. Certainly the writer's spirit was sufficiently impartial, and his expression candid enough, if we may take some of his closing lines as in earnest, —

"Run God, run devil,
Run who may run best,
And let take all the rest!
We set not a nutshell
The way to heaven or to hell."

Having been refused license to print, the poet naturally used greater license of speech in those later effusions, which he had printed as broadsides and scattered among the people. His "Why come ye not to Court?" is much after the manner of "Colin Clout." It deals with the current events, and may be taken as a running commentary upon the policy of the court,

particularly in regard to ecclesiastical matters. It appears to have been composed in parts from time to time, and these fragments seem to have been loosely thrown together into a poem of the same general character throughout. The poem belongs historically to 1522–23. Wolsey was at that time archbishop of York, cardinal and lord chancellor of England. His enemies were assailing him on every side, and probably none of their shafts were tipped with a deadlier poison than the rude wit of Skelton. No matter what the opening of a paragraph may seem to aim at, it is sure to have a range wide enough to take in the unpopular primate. This passage shows how easily the poet loses scent of all other game, —

> "Twit, Andrew, twit, Scot,
> Gae hame, gae scour thy pot,
> For we have spent our shot:
> We shall have a *tot quot*
> From the pope of Rome
> To weave all in one loom,
> A web of linsey-woolsey,
> *Opus male dulce.*"

The pun on the cardinal's name in the line next to the last is plain enough, and considering the character of the piece as a whole, such wit is not to be condemned. If we care to behold the undissembled depravity of Skelton in the way of punning, we have only to turn to some Latin lines of his which are with propriety called "virulent." This piece of ranting begins with —

> "Proh dolor, ecce, maris lupus, et nequissimus ursus!"

and goes on speaking of "the butcher's calf," and takes ten lines to make it clear that the "maris lupus" is none other than Wolsey. And then we discover

that "maris lupus" (sea-wolf) is wolf-of-the-sea; *i. e.*, Wolsey.

The epithet "butcher's calf" is used with reference to Wolsey's father, who is reported to have been a butcher. Whoever is curious in regard to the family history of the great chancellor will find much of interest in a recent publication entitled, "In and about Ancient Ipswich."

Turning back to "Why come ye not to Court," we hit upon a spirited account of the manner in which Wolsey bore himself in the Star Chamber. The truth in it is its fidelity to the popular idea of the way in which the business of that court was carried on. A few lines will show the quality of the work, —

> "He is set so high
> In his hierarchy
> Of frantic frenzy
> And foolish fancy
> That in the Chamber of Stars
> All matters there he mars;
> Clapping his rod on the board,
> No man dare speak a word,
> For he hath all the saying,
> Without any renaying."

The specimens given are sufficient to show the relation of Skelton's poetry to the history of his own time. No reader of this poet will need to be cautioned against taking him as an unbiassed authority in regard to any matter of Church or State; his recklessness is apparent in every line. Enough, also, has been given of the peculiar Skeltonian verse. It can safely be said of this that it does not admit of elevation in sentiment or style. It has in itself the elements of corruption, and will debase any writer who adopts it, and will debase his theme as well.

But Skelton was capable of better work than his tirades against Wolsey. His "Philip Sparrow" proves this, and there are indications in his moral dramatic piece, "Magnificence," of a nobler if not richer vein. But it is not likely that if he had written worthily of his better genius, he would have been read by so many in his own day, or would have furnished later generations material of greater value. All his work is overloaded with the cumbrous learning of the age, and his "Magnificence," which is a connecting link between the moralities of early times and the modern play, shows learning of a peculiar kind. Not only in the names of some of the characters, "Magnificence," "Measure," etc., but in the sentiments which these express, are we reminded of the Greek philosophic doctrine of "the mean." The piece is supposed to have been written about 1515. Erasmus was teaching Greek at Cambridge from 1510 to 1514. The poet was a Cambridge man, and his residence at Norwich would be likely to keep him informed of what was done at the university. "Measure" was Plato's term for which Aristotle substituted "the mean." These are grounds for taking this drama as the earliest fruit of Greek philosophy in England. If we follow out this clew, it leads to the conclusion that Plato's doctrines were expounded at Cambridge earlier than those of Aristotle. All the literature of that period seems to support the same view.

VII.

WILLIAM DUNBAR.

1460 ?–1529 ?

THERE were three hundred years between the time of Dunbar and that of Burns. Considering this length of time, we find great similarity between the poets and their works. This likeness is all the more striking if we take into account the great probability — almost the certainty, in fact — that Burns never read a line of his predecessor's poetry, — never even heard of his name. The strange identities may be accounted for upon various grounds. We may suppose that the example of Dunbar lived on in the work of succeeding poets, so that his thought and his form of expression were repeated again and again until they were taken into the soul and the poetic life of Burns. Another theory, quite as reasonable, is this, — that life, under all conditions, remains essentially the same in every age, and that the poets who interpret it to us will naturally pitch their notes upon one and the same key.

Neither the time of Dunbar's birth nor that of his death can be learned with certainty. It will serve every purpose of the reader to know that his life must have been comprised within the dates 1450 and 1530. His active life fell in the time of James IV. of Scotland.

This is a period of great interest in our literature. It belongs to the era of French influence, particularly in Scotland. The two governments were closely allied at that time. It was just before Italian influence began to be felt in England. Chaucer, Lydgate, and Gower were admired in the North, where the literature was essentially English. The court at Edinburgh was a powerful stimulus to the genius of the nation. The works of Dunbar not only illustrate the literature of the time, but they show how prolific the age was in poetry. His "Lament for the Makars" — that is, for the poets — introduces us to several writers of his time, whom we know only from this kindly mention by the poet. When we see how rare copies of Dunbar were in Scotland for a hundred years or more, we tremble at the risk these minor writers ran of being altogether forgotten long ago.

The names of poets whom Dunbar says death "has ta'en out of this countrie" are worthy of notice here, for they form a more notable list than will be found for a long time afterwards. Of those who belonged to his own generation, and who were likely to be among his acquaintances, were — "Maister John Clerk and James Afflek," whom he calls writers of ballads and "tragedie," that is, any moral or descriptive poem; Holland, who wrote an allegorical poem called "The Buke or the Howlat;" and John Barbour, author of the "Acts of Robert the Bruce." Of "Sir Mungo Lockhart of the Lee" nothing authentic remains. Dunbar tells us that "Clerk of Tranent" "made the Awnteris of Gawane;" that is, Adventures of Gawin. Sir Gilbert Hay translated the French metrical romance of "Alexander the Great," consisting of twenty thousand lines. Blind Harry wrote "The Life and Acts of Sir

William Wallace." Sandy Traill's work has all disappeared. Of Patrik Johnstoun we know with certainty only that he "and his fallowis" "playt a play to the king in Lythgu" (Lithgow) in 1489. Merseir is unknown but for the poet's mention of him as short and quick of sentence; and in regard to Roull of Aberdeen, and gentle Roull of Corstorphine, we have to take his word for it that "Two better fallows did no man see." The work of Robert Henryson has lasted and will last; not so has the work of Sir John the Ross. "Gude, gentle Stobo," "of whom all wichtis has pitie," claims of us now only the tenderness which Dunbar's mention of his friend suggests. Quintine Schaw wrote "Advyce to a Courtier." Last of all, the poet names "Gude Maister Walter Kennedy," then at the point of death. It was with this Kennedy that Dunbar had had a tilt, called "The Flyting." The performance was a good specimen of literary blackguardism, — if such a thing can be called good.

The poet makes no mention of Gawin Douglas, because the latter was living at the time of printing in 1508; but that he should ignore his eminent contemporary, as he does in saying of Death, "he has all my brether ta'en," has been construed into evidence that there was some grudge on his part, or a feeling of jealousy at least. Such a construction is purely gratuitous. The poet was writing with no thought of furnishing us with literary history or gossip.

Dunbar's manner was lively, and where occasion offered, it was even gay. How sensitive he was to external influences we learn from his "Meditation in Winter." The very first verse lets us into the secret of his moods.

"Into these dark and drumly days,
When sable all the heaven arrays
With mystic vapors, clouds, and skies,
Nature all courage me denies
Of songs, of ballads, and of plays."

We know the man, as we know Burns, from what he tells us of himself in artless simplicity.

Even where he indulges in banter and humor, it is easy enough to read the care that was preying upon his heart, for he was a poor man all his life, and with all his talent and learning was dependent upon a poor and unstable court. That his temper and his morality were of the most cheerful kind was what he had above all to be thankful for. This most melancholy of his poems he closes with —

"Come, lustie simmer, with thy flowers,
That I may live in disport."

Dunbar was richly gifted in fancy. Like Burns, he was fond of presenting his view of the world under the guise of a vision or a dream. A good example of this treatment is "The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins." The entertainment was supposed to be held on Fastern's Eve, which used to be a festival of great jollity. The opening lines will give an idea of the spirit of the piece. It lacks little of the rollicking revels in "Tam o' Shanter."

"Of Februar the fifteen nicht,
Full lang before the dayis licht,
I lay in till a trance;
And then I saw baith Heaven and Hell, —
Methought amangis the fiends fell,
Mahoun made cry ane Dance
Of shrewis that were never shriven,
Against the feast of Fastern's even
To make their observance.

The poet's fondness for this figure gives us a passage of rare beauty in "The Golden Targe."

> "What through the merry foulis harmony
> And through the river's soun' that ran me by,
> On Flora's mantle I sleepit as I lay,
> When soon in till my dreamis fantasy
> I saw approach against the orient sky
> A sail as white as blossom upon spray,
> With mast of gold bright as the star of day,
> Which tendit to the land full lustily,
> As falcon swift, desirous of her prey."

While we are upon this "Golden Targe," it is more than worth our while to turn to the author's description of a May morning, when, —

> "Ere Phœbus was in purple cape revest,
> Up rose the lark, the heaven's minstrel fine,
> In May, in till a morrow mirthfullest.
>
> "Full angel like these birdis sang their hours [orisons]
> Within their curtains green, into their bowers
> Apparelled white and red with blossoms sweet;
> Enamelled was the field with all colors;
> The pearly droppis shook in silver showers,
> While all in balm did branch and leavis fleet.
> To part fra Phœbus did Aurora greet [weep];
> Her crystal tears I saw hing on the flowers,
> Which he for love all drank up with his heat."

Only Chaucer had ever seen such a morning as this before in England, and his description lacks somewhat of the passion which thrills in Dunbar's. Rarely do such visions appear to the eyes of men, but a glimpse of a more stately coming is to be caught where the friend of Hamlet calls out, —

> "But look! the morn, in russet mantle clad,
> Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill."

The most striking mannerism of Dunbar's is the use of the refrain, which is made to bear all the burden of the song. This necessarily limits the performance to a few stanzas, or it becomes wearisome from its tameness. The refrain was quite the fashion in the poet's day, as we see by reference to Henryson and others of his contemporaries.

Dunbar furnishes some of the earliest, and at the same time some of the best, specimens of macaronic poetry in our language. It is true that it differs from the standard article in this, that the Latin is correct, instead of being made up of "vernacular words with Latin terminations," as the rules for this composition direct. A specimen from "The Testament of Mr. Andro Kennedy" will show what this writing was like. The testator gives directions for his burial.

"I will na priestis for me sing
Dies illa, Dies iræ;
Na yet na bellis for me ring
Sicut semper solet fieri;
But a bagpipe to play a spring,
Et unum ailwisp ante me;
Instead of banners, for to bring
Quatuor lagenas servisiæ."

The poem of "The Thistle and the Rose," written for the occasion of the marriage of James IV. and the Princess Margaret of England, is one of Dunbar's best-known performances. It suited the poet's fancy to represent the royal parties to this marriage under the national emblems of their countries. As in other instances, he here threw the allegory into the form of vision, and all Nature, animate and inanimate, graced with its presence the bridal of his king and queen. This plan enabled the poet to convey his compliments

indirectly, and to make them the more acceptable as they were the more delicate. That Dunbar was rewarded for this writing with the bounty of the crown, marks him as poet laureate of Scotland in the earliest years of its literary history.

VIII.

ROBERT HENRYSON.

—— - 1508.

OUR lyric poetry owes its great variety of measures to the early Cambrian and Gaelic songs which were popular in England before the Roman occupation of the island. These songs and the airs to which they were sung survived among the people of Wales and of the Highlands of Scotland until long after the Conquest. It was from the North that in the fifteenth century song and ballad writing and pastoral verse came into our literature. The Saxon poetry of the South of England, succeeded by the French of the Conquest, had acquired little freedom of movement in the time of Chaucer and Gower. The measures were as few as were the subjects introduced into verse. The handling was, in general, tame and monotonous. The poets were looking towards the South, — to French and Italian models. They give us hints that they were not unacquainted with the native products of the soil, but they withstood the bewitching influence of these. It was in the latter half of the fifteenth century that song came in with a flood of melody. The movement was from Scotland, and for its earliest impulse we are most of all indebted to a poor Scotch schoolmaster, Robert Henryson.

The little to be learned of this poet is that he was educated at Glasgow, that he spent his life as a notary and schoolmaster at Dunfermline, and was dead in 1508. The manner in which the date of his death is always mentioned leads us to suspect that it is drawn as an inference from some literary record. There can be little doubt that the statement is tracked to its original source in a stanza of the "Lament of the Makars" written not later than 1508 by William Dunbar, a Scotch poet who is far better known. The "makars" (makers) of this piece are poets, — the two words being synonyms. There is mention here of many poets of Dunbar's generation of whom we have knowledge from no other source. Each of the twenty-five stanzas ends with the refrain in Latin —

> "Timor mortis conturbat me."
> (The fear of death disquiets me.)

Such a refrain leads the author to speak only of those poets of his acquaintance who have died, or are in equal danger with himself. The allusion to Henryson is in this stanza, —

> "In Dunfermline he has ta'en Broun,
> With Maister Robert Henrysoun;
> Sir John the Ross embraced has he:
> *Timor mortis conturbat me.*"

The date of this poem seems to have determined the year before which Henryson died, — excellent authority, and deserving to be quoted. It is not altogether improbable, moreover, that some writer, gleaning for material in a field exceptionally lean, has read into the line devoted to Henryson the word "school" before "maister," and thus settled for all time the question of the old bard's employment. The conclu-

sion might be every way reasonable, and not at all derogatory to the poet in his day or in ours, but yet wholly without warrant. Only a few lines farther on there is mention of —

"Good Maister Walter Kennedy;"

but there is little likelihood that Walter Kennedy was ever a schoolmaster.

The lugubrious refrain of these verses of Dunbar is in itself evidence of indebtedness to Henryson on the part of English poetry. This peculiar feature of verse appeared at an earlier day, as in Chaucer's "Good Counsel;" but it was our poet of the fifteenth century who first made it re-echo the sentiment of the lines which went before it. He had the skill to introduce the refrain so that it bore the burden of the thought throughout. His poem entitled "The Abbey Walk" will illustrate well this writer's admirable technique. I quote the first stanza, —

"Alone as I went up and down
In an abbey was fair to see,
Thinking what consolation
Was best under adversitie,
By chance I cast aside mine ee,
And saw this written upon a wall:
'Of what estate, Man, that thou be,
Obey, and thank thy God for all.'"

The successive stanzas of the poem all end with this last line, —

"Obey, and thank thy God for all,"

as a refrain. When we consider how important a part the refrain has had in determining the forms of lyric poetry, we cannot too highly value such work as this at such a time.

But the one thing for which "Maister Henrysoun" has hitherto received credit is the introduction of the pastoral into English poetry. Considering the success with which this variety of literature was cultivated at a later day by such poets as Greene and Marlowe, we shall hold it no small praise to have been the first to write pastoral verse of merit sufficient to withstand the rivalry of the Elizabethan era, and to please even the taste of the present, which is little tolerant of pastorals. This oldest dialogue between shepherd and shepherdess upon the trite topic of love, charms with its naturalness and simplicity. In these qualities it has not been excelled. The piece takes its title from the names of the two whose conversation is reported, "Robin and Makyn." It may be of service to remark that "Makyn," the name of the fair shepherdess, is from Mary and the diminutive ending "kin," so that we may read the title in modern English as "Robert and Little Mary." The two are tending neighboring flocks of sheep upon the Scottish hillsides. Makyn quite innocently begins the talk on love with the proposal to teach her clownish companion the A B C of that passion. She proceeds so far as these elements, —

> "Be hend, courtéss, and fair of feir,
> Wisé, hardy, and free."
>
> (Be gentle, courteous, fair of soul;
> Be wise, be bold, be free.)

The loutish Robin declares that he knows nothing of love, and intimates that he finds occupation for his time and thoughts in the care of his sheep. The maiden soon passes to entreaty for the love of her companion in language which confesses the depth and the sincerity of her feelings. This exposes her to the

scorn of the swain, who listens impatiently. He tells her at last that he has wasted a good deal of time, and he brings the interview to an end abruptly with this remark, —

> "Makyn, some other man beguile,
> For homeward I will fare."

Thereupon he goes on his way home at evening, —

> "As light as leaf of tree,"

counting his gain and proud of his diligence.

A little time is now supposed to have elapsed, — time enough for Makyn to have recovered from the discomfiture of her first attempt to teach the art of love, when her flock is again feeding alongside the flock of Robin. This time it is the swain who takes a fancy to have the neglected lesson repeated. He now has ample time for it; he has a decided inclination for it, and he descends to entreaty that the fair shepherdess will favor him with further talk on love. But the tables are turned. Makyn has no leisure for idle talk and no care for the distress of her lover. For his imploring prayer she has the cool reply, —

> "As thou hast done, so shall I say,
> 'Mourn on;' I think to mend."

There is a good deal of this plain talk, for it is as difficult a task to make Robin understand that his love is now a thing of no account at all, as it was in the former instance to get him to comprehend what love is. It is Makyn that goes home this time singing and light of heart. There is nothing finer or more natural in Theocritus than this idyllic passage of humble life. It can scarcely be said that in purity of tone and truth-

fulness of sentiment this oldest pastoral in English poetry has been improved upon by the refinements of later poets. In the simplicity of its conception and in vivacity of treatment this little poem shows the grace and elegance of Sicilian verse.

IX.

SIR THOMAS MORE.

1480–1535.

IT is not a rare occurrence to meet with references to Sir Thomas More as the earliest master of English prose composition. In connection with that statement the very same writers are apt to quote from his "Utopia" as being the best known of that author's works. On both points these historical critics are at fault. Certainly the "Utopia" cannot be cited as a specimen of More's English, for he wrote the book in Latin, and no translation of it was made until 1551, — thirty-five years after the original was first printed, and sixteen years after the author's death. As a piece of literary work, the "Utopia" simply helps us to estimate More's faculty of invention, his resources and happy art of illustration, his skill in Latin composition, and nothing more.

Happily, however, there is enough remaining to us of this writer's work in English that we may do him full justice as a contributor to English letters. In the collection of his English writings, amounting to nearly fifteen hundred folio pages, which was published in 1557, there is ample material, and that, too, of sufficient variety to serve every purpose of the literary student.

To this old black-letter folio we turn first of all to discover upon what foundation rests the opinion that More was the earliest master of English prose. The very original of that dogma is not a far thing for us to seek. The book was dedicated to Mary, queen of England, by William Rastell, who appears to have been a relative of the man whose works he edited. In this dedication the editor says: "The wise and godly man, Sir Thomas More, Kt., etc. (my dear uncle), wrote in the English tongue so many and so well as no one Englishman (I suppose) ever wrote the like. Whereby his works be worthy to be had and read of every Englishman that is studious or desirous to know and learn, not only the eloquence and propriety of the English tongue," etc.

From the time of Queen Mary to the present day the opinion of Rastell's has been repeated as faithfully as if by a natural echo. Max Müller's comprehensive law of laziness, which is found to have ruled so generally in the development of language, has even wider scope than its discoverer seems ever to have dreamed of. It has been obeyed with too much fidelity by those who have undertaken to comment upon our literature. It has often been nothing else than this fundamental principle of Müller's that has been dignified with the name of "authority of the past." It is so much easier to take up with the opinion, even of an affectionate nephew, than it is to form an independent judgment from having read, not only the particular author in hand, but several others besides.

In one of his prefaces More has a characteristic remark upon the habits of readers in his day, which ought to make the studious reader now, when there is so much more to be read, all the more tolerant of

superficial reading. The passage is of curious interest also, because it indicates that in the author's time the "primer" was a church book, and not a school book, as we know it.

"Some such places yet as I had happened to find, I have remitted the reader unto in mine Apology, where for his ready finding I have numbered him the leaf. And yet have I for some folk done somewhat more too. For I see well surely many men are nowadays so delicate in reading, and so loth to labor, that they fare in other books as women fare in their primer, which though they be content to say sometime the fifteen psalms, and over that the psalms of the passion too, if they find them all fair set out in order at length, yet will they rather leave them all unsaid than to turn back to seek them out in other parts of their primer."

More was by profession a lawyer, and from comparatively early life he was busy with public affairs; and yet his English writings remind us oftener of the pulpit than of the Bench or the Bar. They consist chiefly of controversial papers, meditations, and religious exercises. The matters under controversy in his day were mostly those of the Church. It was the time of the Reformation. He was born the same year as Tindale, — 1480. He remained a stanch Catholic until he was beheaded by Henry VIII., in 1535. One year later, Tindale, who had taken his place with the Reformers, was put to death by the same sovereign for heresy. It is too late to attempt to reconcile these contradictory events. We have to conclude that perhaps they could not have been reconciled even by Henry himself.

The long and close friendship between More and Erasmus presents now a perplexing entanglement to the student of personal history. The latter was as

active as Tindale in putting the Scriptures into the hands of the people. He was regarded by the Pope as the prime mover of the Reformation. It must have been admiration for the learning and genius of his friend that made More tolerant of his tendencies. How he regarded the writings of Luther we can easily make out from his "Dialogue concerning Heresies." He says, —

"For likewise, as the Holy Scripture of God, because of the Good Spirit that made it, is of his own nature apt to purge and amend the reader, though some that read it, of their invincible malice turn it to their harm, so do such writings as Luther's is, in the making whereof the devil is of counsel and giveth therewith a breath of his assistance, though the goodness of some men master the malice thereof, walking harmless with God's help as the prophet saith, upon the serpent and the cockatrice, and treading upon the lion and the dragon, yet be such works as themselves always right unwholesome to meddle with, meet and apt to corrupt and infect the reader."

This well-sustained flow of language is a good specimen of prose writing in the black-letter days of English literature. There were, however, long-winded prelates of that time, whose discourses show work not inferior to More's. Their scriptural allusions were likely to be more accurate than those of the lawyer, even if the application made proved to be less happy than his. It gives us a good idea how closely Church and State were united to find the privy councillor so largely occupied with things spiritual to the exclusion of temporalities. The great issues which were fought out between King and Commons a hundred years and more after his death were just beginning to shape themselves to the view of Henry's lord chancellor. Two circum-

stances combined to postpone their settlement so many years: the one was the long-continued reign of Henry VIII. and that of his daughter Elizabeth, and the other was the late birth of Oliver Cromwell.

As we lay aside the English writings of More and take up the translation of his "Utopia," the one work of his genius that has a permanent interest, we are struck with a critical remark in the preface to the edition of 1684. More had then been dead about a century and a half. It was not a prosperous age for English letters. The Elizabethan period of productiveness had been followed by a succession of unfruitful years. And yet in that time the translator has this apology to offer for his author: "When one compares the best writers of the last age with these that excel in this, the difference is very discernible; even the great Sir Francis Bacon, that was the first that writ our language correctly, as he is still our best author, yet in some places has figures so strong that they could not pass now before a severe judge." It is worth while to set this estimate of More alongside that of Rastell, and it is even better worth our while to bear in mind the fact that every age has the standard of taste differing in some respects from all others. We must judge the literature of the past by the standard that was recognized at the time it was produced.

More's "Utopia" was neither the first nor the last of works of its kind. In the fourth century before Christ, Plato had developed his idea of the true commonwealth in his "Republic." In some of his other treatises he showed how the principles which he had settled would be carried into operation in actual government. He pretended that his system of government was brought from the lost island of Atlantis nine thousand years before his day. In the first century of

our era, Plutarch also tried his hand at painting an ideal commonwealth. His plan of government was based on the constitution and laws of Sparta; for the scheme was worked out in connection with his Life of Lycurgus. Since More's day his plan has been imitated often enough to show how popular the idea was. The best-known of these later attempts in this line is the "New Atlantis" of Sir Francis Bacon. The seat of this ideal republic was in those seas where a great southern continent was then supposed to be. Naturally enough, Bacon regarded science and knowledge as the civilizers of mankind and the founders of government. At the same time an Italian theorist, Campanella, either adopted the ideas of Bacon, or else developed similar ideas of himself; but the Inquisition just then interested itself in the welfare of the philosopher's soul, and to that end kept his body in prison for twenty-seven years. It was during this term of imprisonment that he wrote "The City of the Sun." It is unnecessary to mention recent books which are calculated to recall from the past Plato's "Republic" and More's "Utopia."

The meaning of Utopia is "nowhere," and by taking this word for the title of his book, More intimates plainly enough that the whole scheme and polity of his State is imaginary. The book was written in 1615–16. At that time all Europe was eager for knowledge of America. More pretended to have had his information in regard to a remote American people from a seafaring man whom he met at Antwerp. He manages to introduce this "ancient mariner" in company with Peter Giles in a very dramatic way.

"Upon a certain day when I had heard the divine service in our Lady's Church — which is the fairest, the most gorgeous and curious church of building in all the

city, and also most frequented of people — and, the service being done, was ready to go home to my lodging, I chanced to espy this aforesaid Peter talking with a certain stranger, a man well-stricken in age, with a black, sun-burned face, a long beard, and a cloak cast homely about his shoulders, whom by his favor and apparel forthwith I judged to be a mariner. But the said Peter, seeing me, came unto me and saluted me."

Through his friend Giles, More became acquainted with the seaman Hithloday (that is, Follyson), who gives an account of the Utopians. An air of verisimilitude is given to the whole by explicitness of statement. In a letter to Giles, More refers to the account of a bridge across a waterless stream in Utopia, to learn if his recollection of it is correct. His solicitude in regard to the length of a bridge where there was no water to be crossed is a fine example of what we call by the absurdly inconsistent terms "dry humor." The passage is characteristic: —

"For whereas Hithloday (unless my memory fail me) saith that the bridge which goeth over the river of Anyder (that is, Lackwater) is five hundred paces, that is to say, half a mile in length, my John saith that two hundred of those paces must be plucked away; for that the river containeth there not above three hundred paces in breadth. I pray you heartily call the matter to your remembrance. For if you agree with him, I also will say as you say, and confess myself deceived. But if you cannot remember the thing, I will write as I have done, and as mine own remembrance serveth me. For as I will take good heed that there be in my book nothing false, so if there be anything doubtful, I will rather tell a lie than make one, because I had rather be good than wise."

We cannot hope, at this day, to understand all the ironical allusions to men and measures in More's book;

but it is easy to see why it was not translated and published in England during the lifetime of Henry VIII. No doubt copies of the Latin editions which were printed on the Continent from 1517 onwards were in the hands of scholars and public men all those years, and that the veiled sarcasm of the work was more effective than open attacks upon the Government would have been.

X.

SIR THOMAS ELYOT.

1495?–1546.

ABOUT the end of the sixteenth century, Nash, who has ever since been familiarly known as Tom Nash, wrote an "Address to the Gentlemen Students of both Universities." The performance is characteristic of the writer and his time; it embraces a great deal of the literary gossip of that day. But what interests us just now in this rare old pamphlet is the fact that it contains mention of a man who had been conspicuous in literary circles fifty years before. The reputation with which Nash was there dealing was too far from his time and from his associations to leave grounds for doubting any critic's candor. Indeed, he seems to have known very little of Elyot's life; for the fact that this mention of him occurs in a pamphlet addressed to the members of the universities makes it appear that the writer supposed Elyot was a university man. Such presumption was most reasonable from the character of his writings, and the mistaken impression under which Nash labored has been removed from the minds of scholars only within the last ten years. In discussing the literature of his own day, which happened to be the day of Shakspeare, Nash took occasion to refer to the eminent men of an earlier generation who had spent their lives in literary pursuits. Speak-

ing of the first half of his century, he says, "But amongst others in that age, Sir Thomas Elyot's elegance did sever itself from all equals, although Sir Thomas More, with his comical wit, at that instant was not altogether idle."

This bit of criticism couples two names which were prominent in the time of Henry VIII. Both were associated with matters of state and with literature. It is not without interest to note that the one of these names which Nash thought worthy to be written first is the one which the world has neglected and wellnigh forgotten. More has been faithfully kept in mind, while his fellow has maintained but a shadowy reputation. From the time of Elizabeth to the present, one needs to read our literary history with a good degree of care that the name of Elyot may not escape him. As in the case of Andrew Rykman, you may "read his name and date." More than that relating to the man will be difficult to find. With regard to his literary work, the deficiency has been largely supplied by Mr. Croft's edition of Elyot's chief work, "The Boke named the Governour devised by Sir Thomas Elyot, Knight: 1531." Before that edition appeared, in 1880, all notices of this author seemed rather echoes of early applause than opinions formed from an acquaintance with his work. They were expressed in the most general terms. As a sample, it will prove of interest to read what Ascham, Queen Elizabeth's tutor and the author of "The Schoolmaster," has to say of this man, "which surelie for his lerning in all kynde of knowledge bringeth much worshyp to all the nobilitie of Englande." This gracious recognition perhaps was not attended by a "solid reflection" which took in the comparison made at a later day. Hallam wrote that

he considered Elyot "worthy, upon the whole, on account of the solidity of his reflections, to hold a higher place than the author of 'The Schoolmaster,' to whom in some respects he bears a good deal of resemblance."

Sir Thomas Elyot died in 1546. The date of his birth is not known, and we have no means for determining his age. There are circumstances that lead one to suppose that he was not an old man when he died. As we have seen, "The Governour" was first published in 1531. It may be thought that a work of so much learning and gravity marked the full maturity of the writer's powers, and that fifteen years later he had reached the full limit of life. But it is plain that Elyot did not consider this as the heaviest task he set himself to do. About 1537 he was at work upon a "Dictionarie declarying latine by englishe." As this was a new field, he must have contemplated many years of diligent work, such as a man feeling himself much past his prime would not willingly undertake.

This project of a Latin-English dictionary is of literary interest as the earliest work of its kind. It is also of personal interest, because it shows us the nature of Elyot's studies, and moreover it gives us one of the pleasantest notices of Henry VIII. that is anywhere to be met. Elyot writes of his king, "Your Highness in the presence of divers your noblemen, commending my enterprise, affirmed that if I would earnestly travail therein, your Highness, as well with your excellent counsel as with such books as your Grace had and I lacked, would therein aid me."

His last work — written, perhaps, in the last year of his life — was entitled "The Preservative agaynste Deth." It was, no doubt, written in anticipation of his

own death, and its purpose seems to have been to show how much of his life would not be terminated by that event. It contains in brief his ideal of life. Of his own position as a public man he writes in the preface, —

"A knight hath received that honor, not only to defend with the sword Christ's faith and his proper country against them which impugneth the one or invadeth the other, but also, and that most chiefly, by the mean of his dignity (if that be employed where it should be, and esteemed as it ought to be), he should more effectually with his learning and wit assail vice and error, most pernicious enemies to Christian men, having thereunto for his sword and spear his tongue and his pen."

This lofty ideal of public duties and social obligations in civil life goes far towards reconciling us to the inequalities of condition and to the hardships of the many, under the feudal system. The flower of chivalry, if so fair as this, was worth great outlay in its production. That Elyot lived up to his ideal might be inferred from the character of his work, had he not favored us with this reflection upon his life: —

"Yet am I not ignorant that divers there be which do not thankfully esteem my labors, dispraising my studies as vain and unprofitable, saying in derision that I have nothing won thereby, but the name only of a maker of books, and that I set the trees, but the printer eateth the fruits. Indeed, although disdain and envy do cause them to speak it, yet will I not deny but that they say truly. For if I would have employed my study about the increase of my private commodity which I have spent in writing of books for others' necessity, few men doubt (I suppose) that do know me, but that I should have attained ere this time to have been much more

wealthy, and in the respect of the world in a more estimation."

The above quotation will help to form an idea of the conditions under which literary work was done in England three hundred and fifty years ago. It may reconcile some workers in the less attractive fields to-day.

"The Governour" is the one work of Elyot's by which his reputation lives; but it is little less than a miracle that this life has been prolonged. The popularity of the book was great in its author's lifetime. It went through several editions, and was quoted by English and foreign writers. In the Elizabethan era it was read chiefly by the studious few. Commentators upon Shakspeare have remarked that the incident in the life of Henry V. to which allusion is made in the following lines, is told in "The Governour;" but they have failed to tell us that the story can be traced to no earlier original: —

"*Chief Justice* I am assured, if I be measured rightly,
Your Majesty hath no just cause to hate me.
King. No!
How might a prince of my great hopes forget
So great indignities you laid upon me?
What! rate, rebuke, and roughly send to prison
The immediate heir of England! Was this easy?
May this be washed in Lethe, and forgotten?
Chief Justice. I then did use the person of your father;
The image of his power lay then in me:
And, in the administration of his law,
Whiles I was busy for the commonwealth,
Your Highness pleased to forget my place,
The majesty and power of law and justice,
The image of the king whom I presented,
And struck me in my very seat of judgment."[1]

[1] Henry IV. Part II. Act v.

There is no entry upon the rolls of court of the commitment of the prince for contempt or for other cause.

Elyot's "Boke named the Governour" is devoted to an account of the treatment which is proper to the well-born child in his infancy, the exercises and studies which will engage his youth, and the employments and offices which will occupy his mature years. The work is supposed to have been modelled upon one in Italian by Patrizi, "De Regno et Regis Institutione." Elyot had been a resident of Italy as agent of his Government, and was no doubt familiar with the literature of that country. His work shows an acquaintance with Patrizi, as it does with many other writers in various languages. Perhaps it would be nearer the truth in the case to refer both these works to Xenophon for their original.

It will be seen that the plan of the author was such as to admit of the display of a great amount of learning. In its development he would be influenced by his previous reading. He would naturally quote the opinions of earlier writers, and accompany these with a running commentary of his own. In citing from ancient authors he has often done more than to give the substance of their words in English. He has often made translations of extended passages. In looking at this part of his work, we must bear in mind that there were English versions of very few classical writings. All the more difficult then was it to adapt our language to the work of translating, and all the more valuable were his efforts to English readers. His metrical versions, though clumsy, seem to give some intimation of the manner of Spenser. As a specimen, the following from Homer will answer. He

introduces the lines with the naïve statement that they are "put in Englisshe, not so wel as I founde them in Greke, but as well as my witte and tonge can expresse it."

"When I thee consider, Ulysses, I perceive
Thou dost not dissemble to me in thy speech
As others have done, which craftily can deceive,
Untruly reporting where they list to preach
Of things never done; such falsehood they do teach.
But in thy words there is a right good grace,
And that thy mind is good, it showeth in thy face."[1]

One stanza from the translation of some lines of Claudian will be of interest, because it is not certain that an English version of the same was again attempted for almost three hundred years. No complete translation of Claudian was published until 1817. Elyot prefaces his performance with this statement: "The versis I have translated out of latine in to englishe, not without great studie and difficultie, not observynge the ordre as they stande, but the sentence belongynge to my purpose." The spelling in the lines is modernized, as it was in the lines from Homer.

"What thou mayest do, delight not for to know,
But rather what thing will become thee best;
Embrace thou virtue and keep thy courage low,
And think that always measure is a feast.
Love well thy people, care also for the least,
And when thou studiest for thy commodity,
Make them all partners of thy felicity."

"The Boke named the Governour" was a perfect treasury of knowledge to the men of its day. For us its interest is in the view it gives us of learning in that time. It forms an agreeable and instructive example

[1] Homer, Odyssey, xi. 362–366.

of early literary work in our language. It is a lasting monument to the varied and extensive learning, to the patient industry, and to the literary skill of its author, who was the generous rival of Sir Thomas More, the valued friend of Cardinal Wolsey, and the trusted ambassador of his king, Henry VIII.

XI.

SIR THOMAS WYATT.

1503–1542.

BOTH in time and in rank, Wyatt was the first of the courtly poets, as they were called, who indulged their taste for letters and cultivated the art of poetry under Henry VIII. That this department of our literature stood much in need of cultivation at the time, will be seen just as soon as the bucket is swung a little deeper, and draws from the strong but rude fancies of Dunbar and John Skelton. The grace which was to polish and refine the early vigor of our verse was partly applied in the adoption of approved forms, and partly developed in the smoothing of our speech. In both these ways Wyatt and his followers labored to good purpose.

We shall the more fully realize the poverty of our literature in his day if we reflect that Wyatt was born in 1503, and that his education was completed within the first half-century of printing in England. This education was happily supplemented with residence in France and at the Spanish court, where he made himself familiar with the artistically finished work of the Italian and Spanish poets. He had the taste to estimate at its proper value the worth of exquisite workmanship upon rich material, and he had the skill to apply this to his native tongue. He attempted in

English several new forms of verse with such success that his odes and sonnets and rondeaus have served as models to the present day. What this service implies can be estimated only upon a survey of earlier and of later verse.

Wyatt is read but little now except as a master. He died at the age of thirty-nine, and his short life was filled with important public employments. It was, therefore, wisely well that he attempted no wide range of subjects. The theme he chose is the one to which the world has been pleased most of all to listen. This he elaborated under every variety of form, and it is his form of expression which most attracts us. Of the sincerity of his feeling there need be no doubt, since in one instance, at least, it occasioned his imprisonment and seriously imperilled his life.

It was about the time of the execution of Anne Boleyn that Wyatt was committed to the Tower. He had been one of her train in her passage from Dover to Calais in 1532, and he ungraciously alludes to this service in his quaint lines, —

> "Sometime I fled the fire that me brent,
> By sea, by land, by water, and by wind;
> And now I follow the coals that be quent
> From Dover to Calais against my mind."

Another of Wyatt's amatory pieces is addressed to a lady by the name of Anna, and it is assumed that this was Anne Boleyn. Such an inference is altogether reasonable; but the verses may be regarded as the language of compliment, since the fair gentlewoman was the poet's cousin. At any rate, whatever his sentiments may have been, he had not the temerity to risk rivalry with a royal suitor. Indeed, it is reported for fact that when Henry VIII. was suing for a dis-

pensation from the pope that would enable him to divorce Catherine and marry the poet's kinswoman, it was Wyatt himself who exclaimed, "Heavens! that a man cannot repent him of his sins without the pope's leave!" It was this remark that led the king to consult the universities for their pliant consent, and thus to circumvent the power of the Romish Church.

The exquisite finish of Wyatt's verse may be seen in delicate touches. A single word may be so aptly chosen or so admirably set as to arrest the reader's attention and often recur to his mind. Such felicity of speech is to be marked in the line, —

"For the eye is *traitor* of the heart."

Even more strongly does this quality of his language appear in the kindred verse, —

"But yet, alas! that look, all *soul*."

This marked propriety of taste is not confined to the choice of single words or the order of a phrase, but it is shown upon so large a scale as to prove that it must have been a principle of the writer's thought, and a law to his pen. This is illustrated by the following lines of the poet

"TO HIS UNKIND LOVE.

"What rage is this? what furor? of what kind?
What power, what plague, doth weary thus my mind?
Within my bones to rankle is assigned
What poison, pleasant, sweet?"

In this the art of the handling belongs to a master's hand. Later writers may strive to imitate it without shame; they cannot aim to surpass it without presumption. The cadence in the music of the last line corresponds precisely to the sudden falling of the calm

upon the rage which has preceded. All risk of shock is saved by the elastic linking of alliteration. Once shifted to another plane, we find the epithets "pleasant, sweet," held together not less by their meaning and common application than by the similarity of their closing sound. One cannot fail to notice in the above how the poet passes in the first line from specific questions to one which is general, in a tone of despair. In the second line there is good ground for suspecting that the word "power" is used, as it was often used in the poet's day, in the sense of a demoniac influence. The alliteration of this word and the following "plague" is to be noted; and also of this pair and the pair in the fourth line, when it will be seen that alliteration applies to more than single letters or to simple sounds. In passing from the second to the third line, the feeling is intensified by substituting the torture of the body for mental weariness. The overflow of this last question gives a rushing movement, which is effectually checked, in sense and in rhythm, at the middle of the last line.

As a specimen of Wyatt's verse which can be read with most satisfaction after these more than three hundred years, may be named the Address to his Lute. The piece is too long to be quoted here in full, but fortunately it is too familiar, and too easily accessible in collections of our poets, to need that more than the opening stanza be given.

"Blame not my Lute! for he must sound
Of this or that as liketh me;
For lack of wit the Lute is bound
To give such tunes as pleaseth me;
Though my songs be somewhat strange,
And speak such words as touch my change,
Blame not my Lute!"

But though Wyatt by his verse has earned the same sort of praise in England as Petrarch enjoyed in Italy, it is not for this alone, nor chiefly, that he deserves to be read by the student of our literature. He was the first to adorn English prose with the grace of style. This appears in his private and official correspondence, which has been preserved to the present. One of his friends, Thomas Wriothesly, no doubt had this charm of his pen in mind when he began one of his epistles to the poet in this wise: "Master Wyatt, I thank you for your sundry gentle letters." "Gentle," in its old English sense, was just the term with which to characterize those missives. The word had not then acquired any notion of weakness. The man who penned them was accounted a person of clear head and steady nerve; for when he was sent ambassador to Spain in 1537, his instructions were "to endeavor to fish out the very bottom of the emperor's intentions." Charles V. was at that time too well known to be approached by ordinary diplomates upon such an errand.

It is not often that a private gentleman, and a poet at that, is called upon to answer to a capital charge. Wyatt defended himself against the government in 1541, under trial for treason. He did this successfully, and the oration he then delivered is a dignified and manly production. It contains elevated sentiments expressed with dignity, and commonplaces turned with elegance and ease. The tone of the speech is reflected in the satire which he wrote shortly after upon the courtier's life, wherein he says, —

"I cannot crouch nor kneel to such a wrong,
To worship them like God on earth alone,
That are as wolves these wily lambs among.
I cannot with my words complain and moan,

And suffer nought, nor smart without complaint,
Nor turn the word that from my mouth is gone."

The same high note of moral courage and personal independence sounds through that ode of his beginning, —

"I am as I am, and so will I be;
But how that I am none knoweth truly.
Be it evil, be it well, be I bond, be I free,
I am as I am, and so will I be."

XII.

THOMAS TUSSER.

1515–1580?

IT is a very easy thing to place such a writer as Tusser. The quality of his work stamps plainly the nature and character of the man. The reader of his "Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry" will recognize at a glance a genius kindred to that of Hesiod. He has often been called the British Varro, or the English Columella; but it is from the early Greek bucolic bard that his literary lineage is to be traced. He handles his homely themes with a skill that is lacking to the Roman writers, except to Virgil, who had nothing of Tusser's practical knowledge of husbandry. The latter compares not unfavorably with the author of the "Georgics" even in the embellishment of his subject, and he certainly excels all other writers of his peculiar didactic class in making his maxims apt to hold their place in the memory. His lightly beaten measures and abundant rhymes furnished a model to many a "Poor Richard," and his axiomatic rules furnished thoughts that have kept in circulation to the present time. His book has been a source from which successive generations of almanac-makers have drawn material. It is safe to say that his work has long outlived the memory of the man.

Tusser belongs to the earlier part of the Elizabethan era; his death happening somewhere about 1580. In its own humble way, his work is as remarkable as is that of his contemporaries, who were making English literature the glory of the realm and of the race. We may disregard the subject-matter of his work, — that which shows how he labored to promote the almost sole industry of England in that age, — and examine it now simply from a literary point of view. And the wonder is to find that a book written for the edification of the traditional "Hodge" should show anything of literary grace or refinement. It will be found, however, one of the most curious and instructive books to be consulted in regard to the history of English metres.

Naturally enough, rhyming was the contrivance most relied upon for suiting the phrase to easy memorizing. Rhymes are therefore frequent everywhere in Tusser. It will be not without interest at least to see how he uses them, and to compare his usage with that of later poets. A little attention to his use of sectional rhyme, as it is called, will enable us to discover this in the dramatists, where it is apt to be overlooked. As an example, the first section of the second of these two lines contains a perfect rhyme, independent of the final, —

> "It is too much, we daily hear,
> To *wive* and *thrive* both in one year."

Upon precisely the same old Saxon pattern, Burns wrote, —

> "Let other poets raise a fracas
> 'Bout *vines* and *wines* and drunken Bacchus."

From Shakspeare's "Coriolanus" we get this sectional rhyme, where final rhyme is disregarded, —

"He hath won
With *fame* a *name* to Caius Marcius; these
In honor follows Coriolanus."

More frequently than otherwise, the sectional rhyme is only consonantal, the vowels being unlike. The first line of the following, from Tusser, gives us an instance of this rhyme: —

"By *leave* and *love* of God above
I mean to shew, in verses few,
How through the breers my youthful years
Have run their race."

The "Faërie Queene" of Spenser affords plenty of specimens like this: —

"He *staid* his *steed* for humble miser's sake."

The following is from the "Taming of the Shrew:"

"These kites
That *bate* and *beat* and will not be obedient."

In this, from "Romeo and Juliet," we find the consonantal rhyme in both sections:

"I 'll *look* to *like*, if looking liking move."

Some of Tusser's rhymes are so cheaply made that they can be justified only on the plea that he was contriving means whereby the rustic mind could grasp and hold his thought. Such are the following: —

"To *teach* and *unteach* in a school is unmeet;
To *do* and *undo* to the purse is unsweet."

"Both *bear* and *forbear* now and then as ye may."

Shakspeare is about as easy with his rhyme in the "Taming of the Shrew," —

"And *will you*, *nill you*, I will marry you."

And again in "Love's Labor's Lost," —

"To feel only looking on *fairest* of *fair*."

The rhyming section is less frequently the last one of the verse in Tusser. Here is a specimen: —

"Good husbandmen must *moil* and *toil*."

From the "Faërie Queene" we have, —

"He vilely entertains, and *will* or *nill*,
Bears her away."

Also from the "King Henry IV." of Shakspeare, —

"What horse? A roan, a crop-ear, is it not?
It is, my lord.
That *roan* shall be my *throne*."

We come to realize how important a part this sectional rhyme plays in English verse when we find it creeping into blank verse. It is difficult to say whether Milton availed himself of its use, or whether he unconsciously stumbled upon it: but the examples are frequent, as:

"Their *armor* helped their *harm*, crushed in and bruised."

Another familiar contrivance of Tusser's is the inverse rhyme. It needs no definition. An instance of it will make its nature plain, —

"These steps both *reach* and *teach* thee shall
To come by *thrift* to *shift* withal."

"Tam o' Shanter" is of the same construction; but the movement is more rapid, to suit the thought: —

"The piper *loud* and *louder* blew,
The dancers *quick* and *quicker* flew."

This inverted rhyme seems to have been made popular by Tusser; at any rate, it occurs very commonly after his time. It may be said to abound in Spenser. The

reader will come upon it in Shakspeare, where it is used to mark the sections of the verse. This is particularly the case when the first section contains two accents. From "Love's Labor's Lost" we have such instances as these: —

"She must lie *here* of *mere* necessity."

"Vows are but *breath*, and *breath* a vapor is."

Milton uses this rhyme to the same end in "Paradise Lost," —

"Rocks, caves, lakes, *fens*, bogs, *dens*, and shades of death."

By the same means he elsewhere shows that the cæsura comes after the third accent: —

"And brought into this *world* a *world* of woe."

Its use and its effect are the same in this from "Richard II.": —

"For 't is a sign of *love*, and *love* to Richard
Is a strange brooch in this all-hating world."

When it is seen how much rhyme has had to do with the settling of the accent of our verse, it will be evident at once in what relation this stands to metre, and the effect of Tusser's overabundance of rhyme will be appreciated. He tried his hand upon almost every kind of rhymed verse in English, and a few verses in Latin. He wrote sonnets, acrostics, and alliterative pieces, running one of the latter to the extent of twelve lines, and having every word begin with a T. His "linked verses," as they are called, were written upon his leaving court to live in the country, and they are sufficiently curious to warrant the quoting of the first and second stanzas. The linking is done by working the last line of each stanza into the first line of the succeeding one.

"Muse not, my friend, to find me here,
Contented with this mean estate,
And seem to do with willing cheer
That courtier doth so deadly hate.
For Fortune, look!
Hath changèd hue,
And I my book
Must *learn anew.*

"And yet of force to *learn anew*
Would much abash the dullèd brain;
I crave to judge, if this be true,
The truant child that knoweth the pain.
But where a spight of force must be,
What is that wight may disagree?"

and so on indefinitely.

Tusser's work was familiar to the early colonists of America, and its influence may be traced, I think, in some compositions which have circulated, after the manner of Homeric times, without publication. I have heard repeated portions of a rhymed inventory of a farmer's personal estate, which ran in this measure:

"An asher's pail, a thresher's flail,
A frying-pan and kettle,
A long cart rope, a tub of soap,
An iron wedge and beetle."

Tusser gives such a catalogue in twenty-one stanzas, of which the following will serve as a specimen:

"A short saw and long saw to cut a-two logs,
An axe and an adze to make trough for thy hogs;
A Dover Court beetle, and wedges with steel,
Strong lever to raise up the block from the wheel."

The allusion in "Dover Court" is to one that was all speakers and no hearers. It must have been proverbial in that day, and Tusser's use of it as an epithet is an instance of his humor.

The poet's language, where he deals with the most familiar things of common life, is particularly helpful to one in getting at the meaning and use of many of our old colonial words and phrases. The writer when a boy was accustomed to the word "miching," just as Shakspeare uses it in "Hamlet," where the prince says to Ophelia: "Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means mischief." The verb from the same source was also in use; but he never came across the derived *nomen agentis* until he read Tusser's directions for gathering fruit: —

> "The moon in the wane, gather fruit for to last;
> But winter fruit gather when Michel is past;
> Though *michers*, that love not to buy or to crave,
> Make some gather sooner, else few for to have."

The context makes it plain that the "micher" is such a character as we should now call a sneak-thief.

Tusser is good, not only for explaining single words, but for helping us trace the origin of many sayings. The proverb, "The fool and his money are soon parted," is not easily hunted down to the lair from which it sprang; but these lines contain the sentiment in Tusser's form of expression: —

> "A fool and his money be soon at debate,
> Which after, with sorrow, repents him too late."

Another saying which the poet made popular is this: —

> "At Christmas play and make good cheer,
> For Christmas comes but once a year."

It is not necessary to suppose that Tusser originated any of the proverbial sayings which are scattered so plentifully through his works. It is far more likely

that the ideas were common property long before; but he gave them a literary form, and put them into circulation in connection with matters of most general interest. By giving them an almost universal currency in England, he secured their admission into the dramas of the era that followed, and thus contributed to their perpetuation. Tusser's quaint phraseology is to be met with in Shakspeare, — the very best evidence we could have of its favor with the masses.

XIII.

HENRY HOWARD.

1518–1547.

THE beginning of the sixteenth century saw unwonted activity in Europe. The recent discovery of a new world had opened a wide field for enterprise and adventure. The wonderful success which had attended the voyages of discovery and of conquest roused a spirit that had slumbered since the time of the Crusades. The old spirit of loyalty and of worship was revived, but its fires were kindled on strange altars, and the objects of its devotion were not the same. There remained as yet just a little of the old-time chivalry rather as a sentiment of the heart than as a principle of action. How grotesque that spirit would appear in the new age of the world, the genius of Cervantes was about to show. Men were becoming practical. The world was outgrowing the childish fancy that it could reach out its hands and grasp the splendor of the rainbow. It was learning what it could possess itself of, and in such things was hoping to find all enjoyment. The East no longer blazed with the glory it had worn. That brightness faded, and the world turned itself square about to see what promise was painted on the western heavens. Wealth of gold and extent of power were the stuff of which dreams were woven in that day. But gold takes added value from the skill with which it is wrought,

and power is ennobled when employed to the benefit of man.

The recent invention of printing, accompanied by a revival of learning, could not but stimulate the arts. Whether literature is to be classed with these or not, it is perfectly clear that it must share with them the kindly influence of the age. That there was room for improvement will appear from even a hasty glance over English poetry of the fifteenth century. The uncouth verse of Gower and of Skelton lacked all the grace and most of the strength of poetry. It was poor in invention; but, even worse than that, its borrowed thoughts and fancies were presented in beggarly attire. There was a demand for something better, and it was becoming that an improvement in form should precede purer sentiments and loftier thoughts. The case required not so much poetic talent as a fine poetic sense. The inspiration of genius could not supply the want of an intelligent and discriminating judgment, capable of deciding what the elements of poetry really are.

English poetry had thus far gained so little compass of measures, and was so burdened with traditional rhyme and alliteration, that at this stage of its development, form was of greater importance than matter. As an art it was still in the archaic period. Its conditions required a restatement of Horace's well-known axiom, "Poeta nascitur, non fit." The poet of the future at that time was to be made. He was to be shown by examples what was the capacity of the English language for rhythm. Whoever had the ability to exhibit this could inaugurate a new reign of law and order in poetry. Talent must be accompanied by cultivated taste; it must call to its aid instruction. The leader in the reform of poetry must be born to an easy fortune.

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, must have seemed just such a favored child of song. Born about 1516, and beheaded in 1547, his short life of not more than thirty-one years was wholly comprised within the first half of the sixteenth century. His day was one of brilliant promise to the poet and to the world; but that promise was kept only to the future readers of English verse. To the poet the promise was cruelly broken; the shadows deepened soon, and closed in early night. The wonder is that in an age so troubled, enough of cheer and light came into his heart that he could sing the simple yet perfect music of his song.

Surrey's verse is essentially amatory, in accordance with the traditions prevailing in his time. Even his translations from Virgil are of passages which show the sovereign power within her realms of the Paphian queen. He has often been compared to Petrarch, and though it is an honor to any poet to be named in connection with the Italian, even as an imitator, yet in his case the English pupil has been greatly wronged. It has been thought necessary to regard all the poet's sentimental effusions as addressed to some real or ideal mistress, such as was the Laura of Petrarch's devotion, or Stella, the dream of Sidney's fervid fancy. Surrey names but once the object of his love, and this in a sonnet which will serve as a good example of his verse: —

"From Tuscane came my lady's worthy race, —
Fair Florence was sometime their ancient seat;
The western isle whose pleasant shore doth face
Wild Camber's cliffs, did give her lively heat;
Fostered she was with milk of Irish breast;
Her sire an earl, her dame of prince's blood;
From tender years in Britain she doth rest
With king's child, where she tasteth costly food;

Hunsdon did first present her to my eyen ;
Bright is her hue, and Geraldine she hight ;
Hampton me taught to wish her first for mine ;
And Windsor, alas ! doth chase me from her sight.
Her beauty of kind, her virtues from above, —
Happy is he that can obtain her love."

This sonnet tells us all we can glean from the poet concerning the fair Geraldine. Not another line of Surrey's can the reader confidently assume was addressed to her. He wrote of love, for under Henry VIII. this theme occupied the thoughts of court, of clergy, and of common folk ; but the half-dozen wives of the monarch learned to their cost that even this subject was not too seriously to be treated. The poet could well bewail the fickleness of love. In 1536 he sat, together with his father, upon the trial of his kinswoman, Anne Boleyn. The day following the execution of the queen, he saw her memory insulted by another royal marriage. The inconstancy of the king caused the separation of the English Church from that of Rome, and overthrew every monastic foundation in the country. The range of topics upon which one could at that time safely write, and hope to find interested readers, was extremely limited. The wonder is that we find so much truth of feeling and purity of sentiment calling for a more refined and elegant expression. Surrey gave to the work of improving English verse the best efforts of his genius. His fellow poet, Thomas Churchyard, thus compliments his integrity as a writer : —

" And used the pen as he was taught, and other gifts also,
Which made him hold the cap on head where some do crouch full low."

The sonnet which has been quoted above, although lacking the smoothness and easy grace of which the

poet elsewhere proved himself capable, is yet evidence how far he improved upon the harsh and rude diction that had up to this time prevailed. In some of his sonnets, notably in the one on "Spring," which is quoted most frequently of all, the crudeness of an earlier period appears in forced alliteration and in unusual placing of the accent. The most perfect specimen is one in which the sentiment is borrowed from Horace; but the language is unequalled by anything earlier, and rarely surpassed by later work.

"Set me whereas the sun doth parch the green,
Or where his beames do not dissolve the ice;
In temperate heat where he is felt and seen,
In presence pressed of people mad or wise;
Set me in high or yet in low degree,
In longest night or in the shortest day;
In clearest sky, or where clouds thickest be,
In lusty youth, or when my hairs are gray;
Set me in heaven, in earth, or else in hell,
In hill or dale, or in the foaming flood,
Thrall or at large, alive whereso I dwell,
Sick or in health, in evil fame or good, —
Hers will I be, and only with this thought
Content myself, although my chance be nought."

But that which gives Surrey his chief claim to distinction is the fact that so far as we are now able to discover, he was the earliest of our English poets to use blank verse. This is a matter of all the greater interest inasmuch as Milton, more than a hundred years later, evidently indulged the fancy that he was himself entitled to this credit, for he claimed "Paradise Lost" was "the first example set in English of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of rhyming." The mistake on Milton's part is all the more remarkable because he had assisted in editing the earlier poets

of his country, and must have been familiar with most of their works. Moreover, Thomas Heywood, in his "Apology for Actors," 1612, had declared that there was "not any measured verse, used amongst Greeks, Latins, Italians, etc., but may be exprest in English, be it in blank verse or metre." Also, Roger Ascham, in his "Schoolmaster," denounces "rude, beggarly rhyming" in English, as "first brought into Italy by Goths and Huns." He clearly had in mind a comparison of such poetry with the unrhymed poetry of the ancients, and with the blank verse in English before his day.

Any specimen of Surrey's translation from Virgil would suffer in comparison with translations of later date. To appreciate the merit of his work one should read it along with that of Gawain Douglas. It will then appear how greatly our language was improved, and how complete a master Surrey was of the art of expression. One passage will serve as an illustration of the poet's manner as well as more, and perhaps none will better display his quality of tenderness than the lines near the end of the second book of the "Æneid," wherein the ghost of Creüsa bids her husband farewell:

"'Sweet spouse,' quoth she, 'without will of the gods
This chancèd not, nor lawful was for thee
To lead away Creüsa hence with thee;
The king of the high heaven suffereth it not.
A long exile thou art assigned to bear,
Long to furrow large space of stormy seas;
So shalt thou reach at last Hesperian land,
Where Lydian Tiber with his gentle stream
Mildly doth flow along the fruitful fields.
There mirthful wealth, there kingdom is for thee,
There a king's child prepared to be thy mate.
For thy beloved Creüsa stint thy tears;

For now shall I not see the proud abodes
Of Myrmidons, nor yet of Dolopes;
Nor I, a Trojan lady and the wife
Unto the son of Venus, the goddess,
Shall go a slave to serve the Greekish dames, —
Me here the god's great mother holds.
And now farewell, and keep in father's breast
The tender love of thy young son and mine.' "

Surrey's poems were not published until ten years after his execution; but the circumstance that not fewer than half-a-dozen editions appeared during the reign of Elizabeth attests their popularity in that age of literary advancement, and shows how greatly their author must have contributed to the perfection of English verse. The torch he handed on to his successor in the course was kindled to a brighter and a clearer flame while it rested in his hands.

XIV.

GEORGE PUTTENHAM.

15—?–15—?

IN the year 1589 there was published anonymously at London "The Arte of English Poesie." The work was critical in its character, and its rules and principles were illustrated and enforced by abundant references to writers of that time. Among these writers of verse and prose, whose work is made the standard for others, the author quotes frequently from writings of his own that had been previously printed. This is the only clew that is anywhere given to the authorship of the volume. Strangely enough, this clew has proved of no help in tracing the work to its origin. Tradition, however, has not been equally uncommunicative on this point. A manuscript written by Edmund Bolton about 1605, and entitled "Hypercritica," contains this remark: —

> "Queen Elizabeth's verses, those which I have seen and read, some extant in the elegant, witty, and critical Book of the Art of English Poetry (the Work, as the Fame is) of one of her Gentlemen Pensioners, Puttenham, are princely as her prose."

This is the earliest instance yet discovered of Puttenham's name being connected with the book. In 1614 Richard Carew, writing of the "Excellencie of the English Tongue," says, "You shall find that Sir

Philip Sidney, Master Puttenham, Master Stainhurst, and divers more have made use how far we are within compass of a fair imagined possibility in that behalf." Neither the diligence nor the acuteness of subsequent students has brought to light anything to confirm or to disprove the opinion of Bolton and of Carew. The matter is one that can have only a curious interest for us, and a moderate interest at that.

The last years of Elizabeth's reign abounded in similar works. From the time of Surrey and Wyatt to that of Shakspeare, English poets had been trying their hands, not only upon every conceivable form of verse, but upon riddles, anagrams, and imitations of all sorts of geometrical figures as well. Puttenham was himself a trifler in this way, and it is easy to see that he is more occupied with the form of expression than with the idea to be conveyed. This point was noted by Sir John Harrington in answering the remarks of this art critic upon translations. "Though the poor gentleman," says Sir John, "laboreth greatly to prove, or rather to make, poetry an art, and reciteth as you may see, in the plural number, some pluralities of patterns and parcels of his own poetry, with divers pieces of partheniads and hymns in praise of the most praiseworthy, yet whatsoever he would prove by all these, sure in my poor opinion he doth prove nothing more plainly than that which M. Sidney and all the learneder sort that have written upon it do pronounce, namely, that it is a gift, and not an art, — I say he proveth it, because, making himself and so many others so cunning in the art, yet he showeth himself so slender a gift in it."

Harrington's opinion is perfectly correct; but though Puttenham had no gift of poesy, he had mas-

tered the art of this species of composition. His book amounts to nothing as a contribution to English literature, and yet it is of unusual value to the student of literary history. Not that we need assign any considerable influence to this in shaping the work of the great writers who followed immediately upon its appearance. That would be absurd. The argument lies rather in the opposite direction. The book was evidently intended by the author as a means to enable him to make merchandise of his knowledge and his technical skill. In modern phrase, it was designed to meet a long-felt want.

Puttenham professes to have written for the court, and not for the school; for idlers and triflers in literature, and not for authors. He says: "Our chief purpose herein is for the learning of ladies and young gentlewomen or idle courtiers, desirous to become skilful in their own mother-tongue, and for their private recreation to make now and then ditties of pleasure." He teaches the language, the form and the occasion of courtly compliment and ready repartee. In doing this he describes a hundred and nineteen different figures of speech. The properties and proprieties of these figures are set forth and illustrated. If we were to read Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, and the other great masters of English poetry who followed directly after the appearance of this book, with a view to noting the frequency with which these figures were employed, it might be a surprise to us to find how artistic, if not artificial, is the language of these poets. They were writing chiefly for the same class of people as were instructed by Puttenham.

Among many other matters introduced in this treatise, the discussion on which has not yet been brought to

any definite conclusion, is that of metrical quantity in English verse. A lengthy chapter is introduced to show "How, if all manner of sudden innovations were not very scandalous, especially in the laws of any language or art, the use of the Greek and Latin feet might be brought into our vulgar poesy, and with good grace enough." The argument employed upon this point is too long to be followed out here. We can only say that Puttenham claims the idea as original with himself, but concludes that it is "somewhat too late to admit a new invention of feet and times that our forefathers never used nor never observed till this day." He did not anticipate that in our much later day the doctrine would be laid down for us that "independent of accent, quantity neither is nor ought to be neglected in our versification." Bulwer's treatment of the Odes of Horace may be referred to as highly successful attempts in this direction. The following Sapphic certainly proves that temporal metre is possible in English:

> "O liquid streamlets to the main returning,
> Murmuring waters that adown the mountains
> Rush unobstructed, never in the ocean
> Hope to be tranquil."

There is room for great improvement in our language, not only for the uses of the poet, but of the speaker as well, by blunting and dulling the sharpness of accentuation; and no other means appears so well suited to this end as the introduction of syllabic quantity.

The points of prime interest in Puttenham to-day are his remarks upon literature in his own time, and his criticism of the work being done by his contemporaries. As a matter of course he found his own age — one of the grandest in all the history of English literature — nothing else but a weary succession of evil days.

It is with literature as with trade: the times are always at the very worst. Thomas Fuller said that he had never known the time when tradespeople were not complaining of dulness in the markets. Horace opens his First Satire with the same observation, only he makes it more general. It is not within reason that the author should find himself appreciated as he deserves.

But the writer is not altogether consistent in his complainings. At one time he says: "Peradventure in this iron and malicious age of ours, princes are less delighted in it [the art of poetry] being over earnestly bent and affected to the affairs of empire and ambition. So as it is hard to find in these days of noblemen or gentlemen any good mathematician, or excellent musician, or notable philosopher, or else a cunning poet, because we find few great princes much delighted in the same studies." This does not exactly correspond with what he had already written at the end of the first chapter, in addressing the queen: "But you (Madame) my most honored and gracious, if I should seem to offer you this my device for a discipline and not a delight, I might well be reputed, of all others, the most arrogant and injurious; yourself being already, of any that I know in our time, the most excellent poet." Nor is it in keeping with what he elsewhere says, that "In Her Majesty's time that now is are sprung up another crew of courtly makers [poets], noblemen and gentlemen of Her Majesty's own servants, who have written excellently well, as it would appear if their doings could be found out and made public with the rest." Other notices of his own time are to the effect that it was one of great literary activity. His lament of a want of patronage was but the groaning of a mercenary spirit.

From the estimate which Puttenham expressed in the first chapter of the abilities of Elizabeth as a poet, we should not expect his criticism of her work to be unbiassed. The one single instance where he introduces a specimen of her composition is of more than literary interest. By one of the saddest of human incidents, it belongs to the political history of England. The "Sc. Q." mentioned is clearly Mary Queen of Scots. She was beheaded Feb. 8, 1587. This book was entered upon the register of the Stationers' Company Nov. 9, 1588. The passage appears to have been written after the execution of Mary; it belongs to the author's discussion of the figure exargasia.

"I find no example that ever I could see, so well maintaining this figure in English metre as that ditty of Her Majesty's own making, passing sweet and harmonical, which figure being, as his very original name purporteth, the most beautiful of all others, it asketh in reason to be reserved for a last compliment, and deciphered by the art of a lady's pen, herself being the most gorgeous and beautiful, or rather beauty, of queens; and this was the occasion our sovereign lady perceiving how by the Sc. Q. residence within this realm at so great liberty and ease as were scarce worthy of so great and dangerous a prisoner, bred secret factions among her people, and made many of her nobility inclined to favor her party, many of them desirous of innovation in the State; some of them aspiring to greater fortune by her liberty and life. The queen our sovereign lady, to declare that she was nothing ignorant of those secret favors, though she had long with great wisdom and patience dissembled it, writeth this ditty most sweet and sententious, not hiding from all such aspiring minds the danger of their ambition and disloyalty, which afterwards fell out most truly by the exemplary chastisement of sundry persons, who, in favor of the said Sc. Q., derogating from Her Majesty, sought to

interrupt the quiet of the realm by many evil and undutiful practices. The ditty is as followeth: —

"'The doubt of future foes exiles my present joy,
And wit me warns to shun such snares as threaten mine annoy.
For falsehood now doth flow, and subject faith doth ebb,
Which would not be if reason ruled, or wisdom weaved the web.
But clouds of toys untried do cloak aspiring minds,
Which turn to rain of late repent, by course of changèd winds;
The top of hope supposed, the root of ruth will be,
And fruitless all their graffèd wiles, as shortly ye shall see.
Then dazzled eyes with pride, which great ambition blinds,
Shall be unsealed by worthy wights, whose foresight falsehood finds.
The daughter of debate, that she discord doth sow,
Shall reap no gain where former rule hath taught still peace to grow.
No sovereign-banished wight shall anchor in this port;
Our realm it brooks no stranger's force, — let them elsewhere resort.
Our rusty swords with rest shall first his edge employ
To poll their tops that seek such change and gape for joy.'"

Aside from his evident partiality for the verse of the maiden queen, Puttenham's estimate of his fellow-poets is fair in spirit and creditable to his discriminating judgment. We cannot, however, read his book without feeling that the poets of that day hampered themselves unnecessarily with artificial rules of construction and of criticism, and that such books as this were designed to limit the production and the enjoyment of poetry to a privileged class. It was to be quickly shown after 1589 that genius was bound by no laws, nor monopolized by any circle of society. Shakspeare confirmed Sir John Harrington's dogma that poetry is a gift, not an art.

XV.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

1552–1618.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH was a man of affairs rather than a man of letters. His life was a busy one until misfortune overtook him and prison walls restricted his activities. But whether his life was a free one, whether he was ranging the seas with the roving commission of a buccaneer bent upon adventure, discovery, or conquest, or whether the scope of his wandering was limited to pacing a prison yard, or even a prison cell, his unquiet mind never ceased to busy itself with plans of vast enterprise and of noble achievement for the honor of England and for the welfare of mankind. The student of Raleigh's life cannot fail to be struck with the brilliancy of that career; and if the sentiment of hero-worship is easily awakened in his soul, there is risk that he, lost in admiration of gallant feats of arms and strokes of far-sighted policy, may overlook and forget the literary work of the worthy knight. Raleigh's reputation for daring adventure quite eclipses his fame as a writer. To use a familiar old English expression, we may say of him as a man of deeds, compared with himself as a man of words, "he stood in his own light."

The story of that adventurous life has been told over and over again. It is a story that recalls to our

minds what was noblest in character and conduct in the age of chivalry. It appeals to us here in America even more strongly perhaps than to Englishmen themselves, because at so many points it relates to the discovery, the conquest, and the colonization of our country. We cannot well forget that Raleigh spent more than a quarter of a million sterling upon his favorite scheme of planting an English commonwealth in America. He received his first charter from the Crown as early as 1584, and in the same year Amadas and Barlow were despatched to occupy Virginia for Raleigh, who was styled "lord proprietary" of the country. The following year the colony of Roanoke was founded, to be abandoned the next summer. This was succeeded by the second colony of Roanoke in 1587. One hundred and fifty householders constituted the "City of Raleigh," which remains only in name as the capital of North Carolina. Between 1589 and 1602 Raleigh fitted out five expeditions at his own charge. He never ceased his efforts in this direction so long as he retained his liberty, and he never lost his faith in the destiny of America; for even when his own efforts were ended, he wrote, "I shall yet live to see it an English nation." Of course his proprietary title to Virginia escheated to the Crown by his attainder. The dates given above will show how far in advance of the time Raleigh's efforts were made, and they will also suggest how greatly these same efforts contributed finally to the successful planting of our colonies.

The writings of Raleigh indicate that his views were broad and that his spirit was generous and liberal. He overlooked none of the advantages to trade, but the ruling motive to his schemes was a higher one than this. He regarded America as an asylum for those

who might desire an escape from England. He entertained this view at a time when, under Elizabeth, there was room enough and work enough for all England's population at home. The reigns of James and of Charles made those boundaries narrow for both Protestants and Catholics. Colonists were then ready to remain abroad for a lifetime, instead of becoming homesick and disheartened within a year. The colonies were then a blessing as a refuge; and it seems a great pity that one who had planned and labored for them as Raleigh had done, should not have spent his riper years on this side the Atlantic, promoting their welfare, rather than to have been beheaded, as he was in 1618.

But Raleigh's view took in more than simply the political and the commercial advantage which England might enjoy from planting colonies on this continent. He had spent some years of his youth in the Huguenot armies of France, and had imbibed a thorough hatred of all Catholic rule and policy. It was a hard school, and some years later he showed by his treatment of Catholics in Ireland what lessons he had conned therein. How this training may have warped his judgment, it is not for us to consider now. We cannot, however, overlook the fact that Raleigh saw more clearly than any other Englishman of his day what were the ambitious designs of Spain in regard to this continent, and he fully apprehended what results must follow if those designs were not thwarted. The expeditions that he sent across the Atlantic, and those that he himself led in person, partook of the character of crusades. Their purpose was to anticipate Spain on all our coast north of Fernandina, and to wrest from her hands so much as could be secured by conquest. It is certain that

the execution of Raleigh after fifteen years of imprisonment was ordered for the purpose of allaying the vindictiveness of Spain at a time when a Spanish marriage was being negotiated by the English court.

Raleigh's reputation as a writer rests largely upon his very ambitious *magnum opus*, his "History of the World." Only the first volume of this great undertaking was ever published. This was a folio of more than thirteen hundred closely printed pages. It was the work of part of its author's enforced leisure in the Tower. The task which he had set himself in this enterprise was too great even for a hopeless imprisonment. This historical writing was varied, and perhaps relieved, by several shorter essays. One of these was entitled "The Prerogative of Parliament." It was written in the summer of 1615, and was dedicated to the king. A long imprisonment had removed the writer so completely from the scenes with which he was once familiar that he no longer understood the temper or the wishes of James. The book gave serious offence where the intention had been to please, and publication *cum privilegio* was denied. When the book did appear, ten years after its author's death, it was under a foreign imprint.

The "Cabinet Council" was published by Milton in 1658. It would be of interest if we could trace the manuscript copy of this from the time it left Raleigh's hands until it came into those of the poet. The circumstances under which it appeared indicate that it had been valued for its republican sentiments. Another treatise of Raleigh's is entitled "A Discourse of War." The closing paragraph of this has a deeply pathetic tone to the reader who reflects that it was written from the Tower.

"It would be an unspeakable advantage, both to the public and private, if men would consider that great truth, that no man is wise or safe but he that is honest. All I have designed is peace to my country; and may England enjoy that blessing when I shall have no more proportion in it than what my ashes make!"

It was Raleigh's good fortune — perhaps the happiest fortune that befell him in all his life — that he was the intimate companion of Spenser in Ireland. He had the taste to appreciate the great beauty of the "Faërie Queene," and it is to his encouragement of the poet that our world of letters owes a debt of gratitude for the publication of this poem. For the counsel which he gave the gentle poet, Raleigh was well repaid in the dedication of the poem to himself.

"To thee, that art the summer's nightingale,
Thy Sovereign Goddess's most dear delight,
Why do I send this rustic madrigal,
That may thy tuneful ear unseason quite?
Thou only fit this argument to write,
In whose high thoughts Pleasure hath built her bower,
And dainty Love learnt sweetly to indite."

How these two kindred spirits — Raleigh, the man of arms, and Spenser, an under-secretary to the Lord Lieutenant — came together, and what grew out of the friendship then formed, is told in Spenser's "Colin Clout's Come Home again," published in 1589.

"I sat, as was my trade,
Under the foot of Mole, that mountain hoar,
Keeping my sheep among the cooly shade
Of the green alders by the Mulla's shore;
There a strange shepherd chanced to find me out, —
Whether allured by my pipe's delight,
Whose pleasing sounds yshrilled far about,
Or thither led by chance, I know not right:

Whom when I asked from what place he came,
And how he hight, himself he did ycleepe
'The Shepherd of the Oceän' by name,
And said he came far from the main-sea deep;
He sitting me beside in that same shade,
Provoked me to play some pleasant fit;
And, when he heard the music that I made,
He found himself full greatly pleased at it.
Yet, emuling my pipe, he took in hond
My pipe, — before that emulèd of many, —
And played thereon (for well that skill he conned);
Himself as skilful in that art as any.
He piped, I sung; and when he sung, I piped;
By change of turns, each making other merry;
Neither envying other, nor envièd,
So piped we, until we both were weary.
. . . . . .
When thus our pipes we both had wearied well,
Quoth he, and each an end of singing made,
He gan to cast great liking to my lore,
And great misliking to my luckless lot,
That banished had myself, like wight forlore,
Into that waste, where I was quite forgot.
The which to leave, thenceforth he counselled me,
Unmeet for man, in whom was aught regardful,
And wend with him, his Cynthia to see,
Whose grace was great, and bounty most rewardful."

The Shepherd of the Ocean is Raleigh, and the Cynthia of these two poets is, of course, Queen Elizabeth. Raleigh had written a long poem of this title — "Cynthia," — only fragments of which have come down to the present. In the conversation of the friendly shepherds, Raleigh says to Spenser:

"And I, among the rest, of many least,
Have on the Ocean charge to me assigned;
Where I will live or die at her behest,
And serve and honor her with faithful mind."

The author of the "Faërie Queene" was presented at court by Raleigh, and in 1590 the poem was pub-

lished. To that edition Sir Walter contributed this commendatory sonnet: —

"Methought I saw the grave where Laura lay,
Within that temple where the vestal flame
Was wont to burn; and passing by that way
To see that buried dust of living fame,
Whose tomb fair Love, and fairer Virtue kept,
All suddenly I saw the Fairy Queen:
At whose approach the soul of Petrarch wept,
And from thenceforth those graces were not seen;
For they this queen attended, in whose stead
Oblivion laid him down on Laura's hearse.
Hereat the hardest stones were seen to bleed,
And groans of buried ghosts the heavens did pierce:
Where Homer's sprite did tremble all for grief,
And cursed the access of that celestial thief."

The language of compliment could certainly go no farther in praise of any human achievement. In another composition, Raleigh urges his friend to take for the theme of his next song the praises of his royal mistress, instead of writing of the Fairy Queen:

"Behold her princely mind aright, and write thy Queen anew.
Meanwhile she shall perceive how far her virtues soar
Above the reach of all that live, or such as wrote of yore:
And thereby will excuse and favor thy good will;
Whose virtue cannot be expressed but by an angel's quill.
By me no lines are loved, nor letters are of price,
Of all that speak our English tongue but those of thy device."

These passages from Spenser and from Raleigh open a wide vista down the fairest fields of Elizabethan literature. What the patron says of his protégé, and his manner of saying it, fully justifies the return made by Spenser in 1591, —

"Full sweetly tempered is that muse of his."

The lines of James Russell Lowell inscribed on the memorial window to Raleigh in St. Margaret's Church,

Westminster, acknowledge in fitting terms the debt which Americans alone "Of all that speak our English tongue" can feel.

"'The New World's sons, from England's breast we drew
Such milk as bids remember whence we came;
Proud of *her* past, from which *our* future grew,
This window we inscribe to Raleigh's name."

XVI.

GEORGE CHAPMAN.

1557?–1634.

CHAPMAN was a large figure among the English writers of his time, and his time belongs to that splendid period known as the Elizabethan era. As in the case of Shakspeare, little is known of the life of this poet. Neither the date nor the place of his birth is to be fixed with certainty. His personal history is almost wholly matter of conjecture. Few writers or commentators upon his work have appeared, and even the scant labors of these have been little encouraged by an incurious public; and yet we have competent testimony to the fact that Chapman has been a force in shaping our later literature. That well-known sonnet of Keats's, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," is worth quoting for its bearing on this point, as well as for its own charming grace.

"Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe the pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold.

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific, — and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise, —
Silent upon a peak in Darien."

It is true that the great measure of this praise belongs to "deep-browed Homer." Chapman was but an acolyte ministering at an altar in front of that splendid temple of antiquity. But in Keats's day there were other translations of Homer into English, and it is likely that Chapman's was as little read as it is in our time. There is no necessary presumption to be drawn from the sonnet that Keats had not read Pope's Homer. Even then he would have had a revelation as of a new planet swimming into his ken when he "heard Chapman speak out loud and bold." The two translations are as unlike each other as they are unlike the original; and yet it by no means follows that Homer stands somewhere between them. Pope's work was justly characterized as "a pretty poem, but not Homer;" and it is not unlikely, after all, that Pope felt flattered by that judgment. Nobody ever attributed prettiness to any of Chapman's work, — least of all to his translation of Homer. He had too true a conception of the magnificence of his original to belittle it with any petty ornamentation. No one ever heard Chapman speak otherwise than as Keats heard him "speak out loud and bold." This is exactly the manner of the man.

But it is not to poets alone that Chapman's translation has brought the revelation of a new sphere. Art as well as literature is indebted to his work. I cannot help thinking that Flaxman drew his ideas from that source. At any rate, his illustrations of Homer go

along with Chapman's text better than with any other. Although Mr. Ruskin has spoken with contempt of these illustrations, yet they have proved helpful to many in interpreting the poet. They show something of his vigor and strength, if they lack proportion and grace.

Chapman's work of translating was not limited to Homer. He rendered into English Hesiod, Juvenal, Musæus, and Petrarch, proving himself a scholar as compared with the men of his time or of our own. This work was at the time a patriotic service. It helped to keep England abreast of France in the great rivalry of the nations.

Chapman as a writer and as a man is to be judged mainly from his original work. This was, after the fashion of his time, almost entirely dramatic. The reason for this is not in the natural bent of his genius and that of his fellow poets, but it is to be found in the fact that dramatic writing was the only kind of literature that then paid, and it is pretty certain that after having given so many years of his life to scholarly pursuits, the poet was forced to write for bread. One cannot help feeling that the practice by which he had acquired a strong and vigorous handling of foreign subjects rather lessened his chances for success in original work. His plays were never successful on the stage, and in the library they have suffered neglect. It is only here and there at intervals that the reader of them comes upon passages deserving his study and his praise.

The comedies of Chapman are not so much at fault in that the stories upon which they are founded are trivial, as that they are unworthy. Some of these stories had been used by the Roman comedians, and were incapable of being told in such a way as to inter-

est a more refined age. The characters are chiefly borrowed. They were stock characters upon the stage of Plautus and Terence, and whoever has made their acquaintance there is likely to have acquired a familiarity with them such as breeds contempt. The student of English literature will find this field an unproductive one; and yet there are spots that invite and reward a longer tarrying.

Chapman is best in his comedies at points where he is least comic. There are serious passages in them that belong rather to tragedy, and, apart from the rest, are worthy of a master. The interview, for instance, between Strozza and his wife in the fourth act of "The Gentleman Usher" has been admired by every commentator upon Chapman's works. It is that scene which opens with the question of the anxious wife as she meets her wounded husband.

"*Cyn.* How fares it now with my dear lord and husband?
Stro. Come near me, wife; I fare the better far
For the sweet food of thy divine advice."

The whole scene is elevated into a purer atmosphere than one breathes upon the ordinary level of English comedy. Had this been given a fitting place in tragedy, it would have brought its author far more credit. As it is, it must atone for a good deal of dreariness by which it is surrounded.

There is another passage in this comedy more characteristic of Chapman, and short enough to be quoted. It is strikingly Homeric, and displays the power which its author acquired by translating.

"Thus as the lion lies before his den,
Guarding his whelps, and streaks his careless limbs,
And when the panther, fox, or wolf comes near,
He never deigns to rise to fright them hence,

But only puts forth one of his stern paws,
And keeps his dear whelps safe as in a hutch,
So I present his person and keep mine.
Foxes, go by, I put my terror forth."

It will have been inferred already that Chapman is seen to the best advantage in his tragedies. These are sufficiently original and unhackneyed in their plots to be of interest. They deal largely with French, Spanish, and German history of the poet's own time. They show an intimacy with foreign life and manners such as makes it altogether likely that Chapman had lived abroad. But they breathe everywhere a stanch patriotism and loyalty to England that make him a stout defender of the liberties and the honor of his country.

The tragedies are composed with far more care than the comedies; the speeches in particular are labored. The author here more frequently falls into rhyming. The influence of his work on Homer is seen in the use of his figures. Comparisons, in particular, are frequent, but, unlike those of his master, they are apt to be overworked. As an illustration of what is meant, I quote from the fifth act of "Bussy d'Ambois" an example of this kind which ought to have been seen as a "warning fire" by the poet himself.

"Oh, frail condition of strength, valor, virtue,
In me, like warning fire upon the top
Of some steep beacon, on a steeper hill,
Made to express it; like a falling star
Silently glanced, that like a thunderbolt
Looked to have struck and shook the firmament."

Another passage, from the "Revenge of D'Ambois," is of special literary interest because of the reflection made in it upon the manner in which classical studies were pursued by the poet's contemporaries. The

image of the critic's sinking beneath the surface over which he has safely sailed, with all his canvas spread, is more truly comic than anything to be met with in his comedies.

"And as of Homer's verses many critics
On those stand, of which Time's old moth hath eaten
The first or last feet, and the perfect parts
Of his unmatched poem sink beneath,
With upright gasping, and sloth dull as death, —
So the unprofitable things of life,
And those we cannot compass, we affect.
All that doth profit and we have, neglect;
Like covetous and basely getting men,
That, gathering much, use never what they keep,
But for the least they lose extremely weep."

One more example of Chapman at his best, and in which breathes the spirit of England in his generation, at a time just before the outbreak between the king and the Parliament, to show how little was the author spoiled by his foreign studies and residence abroad. It is from Byron's "Conspiracy."

"I therefore mean to make him change the air,
And send him farther from those Spanish vapors
That still bear fighting sulphur in their breasts,
To breathe awhile in temperate English air,
Where lips are spiced with free and loyal counsels,
Where policies are not ruinous, but saving,
Wisdom is simple, valor righteous,
Humane, and hating facts of brutish forces,
And whose brave natures scorn the scoffs of France,
The empty compliments of Italy,
The any-way encroaching pride of Spain,
And love men modest, hearty, just, and plain."

Mention has already been made of the scant measure of notice which has been given to Chapman by editors and commentators. With the exception of

Charles Lamb, few critics have seemed to think him worthy their study. The most satisfactory treatment of his work is that which it receives in the critical essay of the poet Swinburne. This is admirable, and forms the best introduction one can have to the study of the sturdy old Elizabethan poet.

XVII.

ROBERT GREENE.

1560–1592.

OF that numerous company of play-writers who were working alongside of Shakspeare, or were only a few years in advance of him, none will better repay some study than Robert Greene. The development of the English drama was by rapid stages. Among so many who were contending for popular favor at the same time, it is sometimes difficult to decide to whom any improvement should be credited. This task is made all the more hopeless from the circumstance that the work of Shakspeare so far eclipsed all that had been done before that it is now difficult to recover much of the earlier and inferior work. In connection with this point it should be remarked that we cannot now determine to what extent, or in what parts, the great dramatist received aid from the genius or the industry of others. Certainly we may go so far as to suppose that he profited from the failures and the successes of those who were working in the same line with himself. If, as is commonly supposed, Shakspeare owed his learning rather to private reading than to the public universities, then it becomes obvious at once to any reader of Greene how greatly this writer may have contributed to the former's success.

The time of Greene's birth is unknown. It is conjecturally set down as 1560, — four years before Shakspeare was born. At all events, he had completed his studies at Cambridge in 1580, and went upon the Continent for study and travel for the next three years. It is of interest to note that the greater part of this time was spent in Italy, as it indicates the estimation in which Italian letters were then held in England. The influence of this taste is seen throughout all our literature of that period.

Upon his return home, in 1583, Greene took his degree of master of arts in course, and at once applied himself to authorship. His private life, from that time on, the world would gladly forget, were it not that his vices clouded his genius, tainted his thought, and no doubt shortened his days. They have also had unusual effect in blackening his character. We must bear in mind that his time was followed very shortly by Puritan fashions of thought, when art counted for nothing at all, and character stood for everything. This sudden and radical revulsion in feeling will in a large degree explain why it is that we have so little of Greene's work still remaining.

The author deserves to have it said in his behalf that his vices are known rather from specific confessions on his part than from his plays and poems. His life is commonly judged at the estimate he put upon it. In the year of his death, 1592, he wrote a pamphlet entitled "A Groat's Worth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance." It is from this that we invariably find impressions drawn relating to the author. It would be painful and can do us no good to follow him in his course of self-denunciation. Living in extreme poverty and "having nothing to pay but chalk," he is

at last reduced to a single groat, over which he moralizes in this fashion: "Oh, now it is too late, too late to buy wit with thee; and therefore will I see if I can sell to careless youth what I negligently forgot to buy."

Quite likely Greene magnified his vices, and offset his virtuous confession with indulgence in the sin of lying. He was writing for bread to satisfy his hunger, and he knew well the popular taste. It is pretty certain that cant was not unfamiliar to that age. Greene traded upon his knowledge of public vices as well as his own. In his own day he was known as the "Coney-catcher," from the title of a pamphlet in which he exposed the villany of London. There is, moreover, some likelihood that his "Repentance," as it is called, to which reference has been made, was not the only one. It has been commonly supposed that his earliest work was "Mamilia," dated 1583; but Mr. J. Payne Collier found an entry at Stationers' Hall where the name of Greene is interlined, and which attributes to him "a ballad" entitled "Youth, seeing all his ways so troublesome, abandoning Virtue and leaning to Vice, recalleth his former Follies with an inward Repentance." This entry was made 20th March, 1581. If really belonging to Greene, it may have had, even then, a personal application. Everything goes to show that he was morally a scamp, and socially a scapegrace.

Directly the author died, in 1592, his memory was assailed in "Foure Letters and certaine Sonnets especially touching Robert Greene and other Parties by him abused, 1592." The letters were variously signed, but were immediately credited to Gabriel Harvey, a writer of some note. They were scurrilous to a degree which modern literature knows nothing of.

A single passage will show their character, and how rich they are in allusions: —

"If Mother Hubbard in the vein of Chaucer happen to tell one canicular tale, Father Elderton and his son Greene, in the vein of Skelton or Scroggin, will counterfeit an hundred dogged fables, libels, calumnies, slanders, lies for the whetstone, what not; and most currishly snarl and bite where they should most kindly fawn and lick."

Mr. Ward, in his "History of English Dramatic Literature," speaking of these letters, says, —

"His [Greene's] friends could say little in his defence; the ablest pamphleteer among the dramatists, Nash, made the attempt, but seems to have faltered in making it. Yet there is truth and wisdom in the question which he puts to the unhappy poet's enemy, and with which this reference — for it shall be no more — to a sickening picture of sin and its punishment may be fitly concluded, 'Why should art answer for the infirmities of manners?'"

It need only be said that the task of replying to the attack of Harvey upon his friend was one every way suited to the temper and genius of Nash, and his effort in making a defence will disclose to the ordinary reader little faltering at the attempt. It is with evident relish that he engages in the work. He had only to pick up the missiles with which the field was covered, and hurl them back. The opening rather gives promise of vigor.

"Out upon thee for an arrant dog-killer! Strike a man when he is dead! So hares may pull dead lions by the beards. *Memorandum.* I borrowed this sentence out of a play. The Theatre Poets' Hall hath many more such proverbs to persecute thee with because thou hast so scornfully derided their profession, and despitefully maligned honest sports."

Greene's prose is of but little value except as a setting for some really dainty bits of verse. These show great skill in lyric composition. Their beauty cannot be seen except they be read with the context. So read, their beauty cannot be missed. Take, for instance, those familiar verses, so odd in their structure, in which are sung the praises of Samela. Without reading them in the author's "Arcadia," where they belong, one would not take them for a description which one shepherd gives to another of a lady who has come among them. Its courtly phrase is little in keeping with the talk of shepherds in real life; but we will find no fault with the author that he refined that conversation to such a degree.

Although it seems most likely that our literature is chiefly indebted to Greene for forms of lyric composition which he invented or introduced, — forms which are more in favor to-day than they have been at any other time since that writer was living, — yet it is by his dramatic work that he will continue to be judged. In this his merits and his defects are strongly marked. The plays were written to be read rather than to be put upon the stage. Their versification is remarkable for its rhythm and its cadences. Greene's ear was peculiarly sensitive, and throughout his dramas, no matter what character may be speaking, whether it be in poetry or prose, the language shows the influence of assonance and resonance to an extent that proves wearisome. Another peculiarity of his work is what has been called "a vast excess of allusion." His allusions are chiefly mythological and of the classical order, as was the fashion of the time. We can see, in reading Greene, how Shakspeare might have picked up that acquaintance which his writings show with the classics from reading the literature of his own

day. We can scarcely wonder at Greene's delighting in this work; he did it well. A few lines in which Orlando speaks of Angelica's reputation for beauty will make this plain: —

"Swift Fame hath sounded to our western seas
The matchless beauty of Angelica.
Fairer than was the nymph of Mercury,
Who with bright Phœbus mounteth up his coach,
And tracks Aurora in her silver steps,
And sprinkles from the folding of her lap
White lilies, roses, and sweet violets."

Greene lacked — fatally lacked — the crowning faculty of dramatic genius, — the power to develop personal character. His princes talk like princes, it is true; but we cannot distinguish one prince from another. The suitors for the hand of Angelica, in his "Orlando Furioso," are as nearly alike as brothers, although they come from Egypt, Cuba, Mexico, France, and the islands of the sea, and there must have been at least five hundred years' difference in the time of their living. The poets showed little respect for the sober facts of history.

As a more complete specimen of Greene's manner, this address of Orlando to Venus will serve. It has points in common with the opening to Lucretius's poem, "De Rerum Natura."

"Fair queen of love, thou mistress of delight,
Thou gladsome lamp that wait'st on Phœbe's train,
Spreading thy kindness through the jarring orbs
That in their union praise thy lasting powers, —
Thou that hast stayed the fiery Phlegon's course,
And made the coachman of the glorious wain
To droop, in view of Daphne's excellence, —
Fair pride of morn, sweet beauty of the even,
Look on Orlando languishing in love!"

It would not help at all towards solving the problems of life and character to quote from Greene anything that will bear quoting in these days, — anything like that well-known song beginning, —

> "Sweet are the thoughts that savor of content;
> The quiet mind is richer than a crown."

Such purity of taste and sentiment as these would display harmonizes but ill with the author's conduct of his life. The question becomes more puzzling than was Samson's riddle of old, for that required only to find how "out of the strong came forth sweetness."

Greene is commonly mentioned in connection with Shakspeare as having given the earliest literary notice we have of the great dramatist. He speaks of his rival contemptuously under the name of Shake-scene, and he intimates that the latter had filched much from Greene's writings. It does not appear that this attack was noticed, unless it be in a song in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." In the controversy between Harvey and Nash, it comes out that the poet was familiarly called Greensleeves. The chorus, "Greensleeves was all my joy," etc., may have been plain enough in its day.

XVIII.

SAMUEL DANIEL.

1563–1619.

DANIEL was the contemporary of Shakspeare. He was born in 1563, one year before the birth of the great dramatist, and his life extended to 1619, three years beyond the time when his fellow poet finished his career. There was enough of Daniel's work of the dramatic form to make it no difficult matter to compare it with that of the greatest master of the art, and to form an estimate of its relative value. It is surprising to find that, in their own day, this now obscure poet was thought to stand the better chance of the two of securing permanent fame, but if we may judge from notices of his work on the part of competent critics, such must have been the case. Frequent mention of the poet is made by his fellow writers, and it is a pleasant thing to find all these notices of the man so friendly, the invariable commendation of his work so hearty. It speaks well for his character and his conduct in a censorious age and community. Even so abusive a writer as Gabriel Harvey, whose inspiration seems to have been the spirit of rancor itself, says of Daniel and two or three others of his time that they "may haply find a thankful remembrance of their laudable travail." It would be running but little risk

to say that, during their lifetime, Daniel enjoyed a reputation in purely literary circles as much above that of Shakspeare as it is now inferior. This is not to be set down wholly against the fickleness of taste or the liability of judgment to error. The one poet selected subjects of temporary interest, and handled them in a manner peculiar to his time; the other labored upon what is permanent in Nature and experience, and wrought after models of the severest purity. In view of the relative popularity of the two poets, we cannot easily avoid the conviction that, even in Shakspeare's own day, the drama was beginning to lose caste among literary circles, and was fast hastening down to the place it occupied later under the Commonwealth.

Daniel's reputation rests chiefly upon his sonnets, elegies, pastorals, and "The History of the Civil War." His dramatic works are now so little read that a good edition of them will not be within reach until the completion of the publication of his works, in four volumes, by the Spenserian Society.

One of the earliest notices of Daniel, by the way, is to be met with in Spenser. It occurs in that curious pastoral entitled "Colin Clout's Come Home Againe." In this the older poet is generous with his praise, and yet he is justly discriminating and critical. As this performance of Spenser's appeared, at the latest, as early as 1595, and at that date Daniel had published only "The Complaint of Rosamond," various sonnets to Delia, and his "Tragedy of Cleopatra," the author of "The Faërie Queene" must have formed his opinion of the rising poet from these works. Correct as the judgment was upon what he had already done, it could be justly passed upon all of Daniel's work.

"And there is a new shepherd late up sprong,
The which doth all afore him far surpass;
Appearing well in that well-tunèd song
Which late he sang unto a scornful lass.
Yet doth his trembling Muse but lowly fly,
As daring not too rashly mount on height,
And doth her tender plumes as yet but try
In love's soft lays and looser thoughts delight.
Then rouse thy feathers quickly, Daniell,
And to what course thou please thyself advance;
But most, meseems, thy accent will excel
In tragic plaints and passionate mischance."

The prophecy of the poet's earlier work, as interpreted in the closing lines of this passage, was fulfilled to the letter.

Daniel has been known from his day to the present as the "well-languaged." It is remarkable how little of verbal quaintness his writings show. Readers of his poetry need no glossary, as they do in the case of Spenser. Judged by his language, he would be assigned to a period more than a hundred years later. This is a phenomenon in literary history. Had he been read and quoted as Shakspeare has been, then it would have been said that he helped to fix the language. On the contrary, he has been neglected by readers and by students of our literature. Our language has developed without his influence; but the result shows that he had compassed its capabilities. Right to this point is the remark of Edmund Bolton in his "Criticism of Style before 1600": "The works of Samuel Daniel contained somewhat a flat, but yet withal a very pure and copious English, and words as warrantable as any man's, and fitter perhaps for prose than measure." Daniel's own remarks upon this subject, with which he closes his "Defence of Rhyme,"

define exactly his position in regard to the language. The whole essay is of itself a fine example of English in the time of Elizabeth.

"And I cannot but wonder at the strange presumption of some men, that dare so audaciously to introduce any whatsoever foreign words, be they never so strange; and of themselves, as it were, without a parliament, without any consent or allowance, establish them as free denizens in our language. But this is but a character of that perpetual revolution which we see to be in all things that never remain the same, and we must herein be content to submit ourselves to the law of time, which in a few years will make all that for which we now contend, *nothing*."

But it is as a poet that Daniel would have wished to be judged, for of his poetry he says, —

"I adventured to bestow all my whole powers therein, perceiving it agrees so well, both with the complexion of the times and my own constitution, as I found not wherein I might better employ me."

In his special art he possessed unusual taste. With labor and pains he strove for excellence of finish. His failures were chiefly due to the choice he made of subjects for poetic treatment. One who reads in his essay, "A Defence of Rhyme," what he has to say upon the constitution of the sonnet and the stanza in verse, will wonder how it happened that he wrote his "History of the Civil War" in a measure resembling the Spenserian stanza. He was well aware that these limited proportions and stated rests were suited to single independent thoughts and conceits; he should have been equally convinced that they were unsuited to continuous narration.

The stanza of Daniel contains one line less than

that of Spenser, and its arrangement of rhymes is simpler. His lines are also less inclined to form couplets and triplets. The overflow is from the natural rise of feeling. His cadences are musical, although in the management of parenthetical clauses in the closing line Spenser is unequalled. A comparison of the two poets will best show their peculiar merits. This, from the "Faërie Queene," is purely fanciful description:

> "The joyous birds, shrouded in cheerful shade,
> Their notes unto the voice attempered sweet;
> Th' angelical soft trembling voices made
> To th' instruments divine respondence meet;
> The silver sounding instruments did meet
> With the base murmur of the water's fall,
> The water's fall with difference discreet,
> Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call;
> The gentle warbling wind low answerèd to all."

With this compare a stanza from Daniel's "Civil War." The language is supposed to be that of Henry V. It represents well the vigor, the dignity, and the grace of its author.

> "Ungrateful times, that impiously neglect
> That worth that never times again shall show!
> What, merits all our toil no more respect?
> Or else stands Idleness ashamed to know
> Those wondrous actions that do so object
> Blame to the wanton, sin unto the slow?
> Can England see the best that she can boast
> Lie thus ungraced, undecked, and almost lost?"

This form of the stanza was kept throughout the eight books of the "Civil War." In another lengthy poem, entitled "Musophilus," the poet substituted, for the most part, a stanza formed from this by dropping the last two lines. He had previously to these tried, in the "Lament of Rosamond," a stanza of seven lines.

It is to be noticed that in all the forms exceeding six lines the last two rhyme together, but not with any other. The same is the case with his sonnets.

These sonnets are of the simplest form. They consist of three quatrains and a distich. They are addressed to Delia; but whether this be a real or fictitious person, the world has long since ceased to care to inquire. One will serve as an example. It may suggest to the reader Raleigh's song beginning, —

"Go, soul, the body's guest!"

or Waller's later verse, —

"Go, lovely rose!"

"Go, wailing Verse, the infants of my love,
Minerva-like, brought forth without a mother,
Present the image of the cares I prove,
Witness your father's grief exceeds all other.
Sigh out a story of her cruel deeds
With interrupted accents of despair;
A monument that whosoever reads
May justly praise and blame my loveless pair.
Say her disdain hath drièd up my blood,
And starvèd you, in succors still denying;
Press to her eyes, importune me some good;
Waken her sleeping pity with your crying.
Knock at her hard heart; beg till ye have moved her,
And tell th' unkind how dearly I have loved her."

It is a matter that seems to have been overlooked by those who make Waller the first of English Marinists that Daniel not only translated from the Italian poet, but shows in many ways the influence of that master. This is an important point in literary history, for it proves a more ready and frequent intercourse than is commonly supposed to have existed. But the same correction needs to be made in our

ideas of the commerce of thought, as well as of goods, in all antiquity. One stanza from this translation will show where Waller and all the Marinists might have caught the grace of their finish at second-hand. They have scarcely improved upon this: —

"Fair is the lily, fair
The rose, of flowers the eye!
Both wither in the air,
Their beauteous colors die.
And so at length shall lie,
Deprived of former grace,
The lilies of thy breasts, the
Roses of thy face."

Just one snatch of a song from a pastoral of his must answer for Daniel's lyrics. Rarely has the grace or the melody of this been outdone, though Herrick has taken up the strain.

"Love is a sickness full of woes,
All remedies refusing,
A plant that with most cutting grows,
Most barren with best using.
Why so?
More we enjoy it, more it dies;
If not enjoyed, it sighing cries,
'Heigh ho!'"

XIX.

JOSHUA SYLVESTER.

1563–1618.

THE office of the translator is an humble one. It is his calling to make merchandise of the thoughts of men. In an open market he traffics publicly in ideas and sentiments. He can claim no place in any temple or at any altar of the Muses or Apollo; he sacrifices rather to Hermes, the god of thieves and of pedlers. And yet his vocation is not without a certain dignity, not without value that claims recognition. Few writers in modern times have attained distinction in letters without now and then having tried their hand at this kind of work, and few of these have imported into their vernacular from foreign tongues without advantage to themselves and to the literature which they served. The translator can claim inspiration only at second hand; but even this is better than none. He who interpreted the Delphic oracles, or put in order the fugitive leaves of the Sibyl, enjoyed the honors of the priesthood. The Pythia was of no account until she lost her head.

No language was ever better suited to the uses of the translator than is the English. Its affinities with the Gothic of the North and the Latin of the South give it unusual aptitude to express the subtleties of thought and sentiment peculiar to those people. There

is scarcely a construction in any of these languages that cannot be closely imitated, if not reproduced, in English. Again, our varied relationships are such as to induce a quick sensibility on our part to the moods and fancies which give color and tone to the literature of a people. In our generous pillaging and wholesale thieving, we have complimented highly the work of our neighbors.

As an instance of the success which formerly waited upon the work of the translator one may review the old folio volume of the writings of Joshua Sylvester. It was published at London in 1621, and is almost wholly made up of the writer's translation of a then recent French poem, the "Days and Weeks" of Du Bartas. This work was accompanied by the encomiastic tributes in verse of Ben Jonson, Daniel, Davis, Hall, Vicars, and other poets of the time. The first of these bestowed upon the author a great deal of such praise as this, —

> "Thine the original; and France shall boast
> No more the maiden glories she has lost."

In his "Address to the Reader," the printer of the volume, Humfrey Lownes, says: "The name of Joshua Sylvester is garland enough to hang before this doore, — a name worthily dear to the present age and to posterity." The work itself was one far more likely to be produced in Puritan England than in romantic France. It opens with a highly poetic account of the creation and of the fall, and continues through the law and the prophecies to the fulfilment of these in the coming of the Messiah. This poetic treatment of Hebrew thought and experience was admirably adapted to the English taste of that period, and it is not at all surprising that

the translation of it was received with marks of especial favor. At this day it would have little of its original interest, were it not for its influence upon later English literature.

Humfrey Lownes had his printing-house on Bread-street Hill, London, at the time the folio edition of Sylvester's works was published, and the father of John Milton was his near neighbor and intimate friend. It is matter of tradition that the elder Milton was often consulted in regard to the work. We may be sure the volume was a familiar and valued one in that Puritan home. Milton the poet was then thirteen years of age, and, living at his father's, such poetry as the "Days and Weeks" could not fail to impress with its bold imagery and lofty conceptions his youthful mind. It detracts not at all from the merit of "Paradise Lost," nor from the glory of its author, that students of this poem have detected and traced these impressions in its lines. Some of this critical work may be found in Hayley's "Conjectures on the Origin of Paradise Lost." In the year 1800 Henry Dunster published a small and not very satisfactory book on the same subject. The examination made by Dunster is almost wholly verbal, and the comparison is pretty nearly limited to "Comus." A collation of "Paradise Lost" and of "Paradise Regained" with "Days and Weeks" with respect of subject-matter would be of greater value. Mr. David Masson, in his essay introductory to an edition of Milton, says "That Sylvester's Du Bartas had been familiar to him from his childhood, is quite certain." It seems altogether likely that the poet read the work before the folio edition, for it appeared in quarto form in 1613, when he was but five years old, and the first part of it had been printed in 1598, before

he was born. If the claims which have been made for the influence of this translation upon our literature are well founded, then the hand that made it is entitled to no small share of honor.

But whatever may be the merit of Sylvester as an interpreter of others' thoughts, his own original work will well repay some study. His name has been so completely overshadowed by the greater names of the generation to which he belonged that it is now seldom met. His complete works, however, comprise pieces in verse which show much skill in the art of poetic expression, even though they be lacking in the higher quality of invention. This delicacy of touch, this grace and propriety of handling, the poet had doubtlessly acquired in the practice of translating. The principles of the arts of poetry and of criticism are more surely and easily drawn from several different schools than they are developed in any one. As a specimen of Sylvester's manner, two stanzas from a little poem of his will answer well. Their subject is one upon which poets of that day frequently tried their hand, so that it is easy to compare his work with that of others, and judge fairly of his success.

"I weigh not fortune's frown or smile,
I joy not much in earthly joys,
I seek not state, I seek not style,
I am not fond of fancy's toys;
I rest so pleased with what I have,
I wish no more, no more I crave.

. . . . . .

"I feign not friendship where I hate,
I fawn not on the great in show;
I prize, I praise a mean estate
Neither too lofty nor too low;
This, this is all my choice, my cheer, —
A mind content, a conscience clear."

These lines show considerable tact in the management of the commonplaces of poetry. With the iteration of sentiment will be found sufficient variety and smoothness of expression to relieve of weariness. The following sonnet will exhibit to even better advantage this poet's sustained power of thought and technical skill of execution: —

"Were I as base as is the lowly plain,
And you, my love, as high as heavens above,
Yet should the thoughts of me, your humble swain,
Ascend to heaven in honor of my love.
Were I as high as heaven above the plain,
And you, my love, as humble and as low
As are the deepest bottoms of the main,
Wheresoe'er you were, with you my thoughts should go.
Were you the earth, dear love, and I the skies,
My love should shine on you like to the sun,
And look upon you with ten thousand eyes,
Till heaven waxed blind, and till the world were done.
Wheresoe'er I am, below or else above you,
Wheresoe'er you are, my heart shall truly love you."

These lines, it is true, seem more like a task set to practise the hand in poetic composition than as the spontaneous outpouring of a genuine inspiration; but yet from a literary point of view they have much to recommend them. They show the skill belonging to the accomplished translator.

XX.

MICHAEL DRAYTON.

1563–1645.

IT is a very pleasant thing to meet with an English poet who has none but friendly words for his fellow poets, and who is himself in turn always spoken of with affection and respect. Of the Elizabethan poets, Drayton enjoyed a large measure of popularity. His name appears attached to many of those commendatory verses which the publishers of that day were in the habit of prefixing to editions, not only of poems, but of prose works issued at that time. In these and in his poetical epistles to his literary friends, the kindly nature of the man is sufficiently apparent. Even Ben Jonson, who manifested so little readiness to be pleased, had the grace to admit to Drummond that the "Poly-Olbion" of Drayton was a success, so far as the poet had gone.

This general favor was due both to the skill of the author and to the choice of subjects which he handled. The poet was thoroughly English in sentiment and manner. He belonged to the England of his day, and that day was one in which his country was making the most heroic chapter of her history. The enterprises then on foot were the themes of his most stirring lines. His ode, "To the Virginian Voyage," deserves to be read by every American, not only for its spirited appeal, but for the light it sheds upon English sentiment

towards colonization on these shores in the early years of the seventeenth century. Its address is sufficiently bold and animated.

"You brave, heroic minds,
Worthy your country's name,
That honor still pursue,
Go and subdue,
Whilst loitering hinds
Lurk here at home with shame."

With the prophetic vision of the bard, Drayton looks forward to an age which we may assume has already dawned, and he discloses to the emigrant a future such as would soften the hardships of colonial life:

"And in regions far
Such heroes bring you forth
As those from whom we came;
And plant our name
Under that star
Not known unto our North.

"And as there plenty grows
Of laurel everywhere,
Apollo's sacred tree,
You it may see
A poet's brows
To crown that may sing there."

A taste of the quality of Drayton's lyric verse cannot but excite a longing for more; and it is this sort of composition in particular that claims the attention of students of English metres. The sample given is enough to show that long before Edmund Waller published anything, — indeed, in the very year of his birth, 1605, — the capabilities of our language were being made apparent. It was in this year that the "Ballad of Agincourt" was published. The fire of that piece has rarely been equalled. It flares and flashes on the

scene ; it snaps and crackles in the words. The measure has been made familiar by Longfellow ; but the merit of that earlier performance cannot be appreciated unless it be read in the spirit of the age in which it was written. As a specimen of imitative language it would not be easy to point the reader to anything more satisfactory than this stanza : —

" They now to fight are gone ;
Armor on armor shone,
Drum now to drum did groan, —
To hear was wonder.
That with the cries they make
The very earth did shake ;
Trumpet to trumpet spake,
Thunder to thunder."

The exultant feeling which palpitates through the lines of this patriotic ballad thrills with a burst of passion in the closing stanza : —

" Upon Saint Crispin's day
Fought was this noble fray,
Which fame did not delay
To England to carry ;
Oh, when shall English men
With such acts fill a pen,
Or England breed again
Such a King Harry ! "

It was on a much slenderer reed than this that Drayton piped soft and low the easy-going measures of " Dowsabel." The metre in this case just suits the light, springing step of the happy girl as, —

" This maiden in a morn betime
Went forth when May was in the prime
To get sweet cettywall,
The honeysuckle, the sherlock,
The lily, and the lady-smock,
To deck her summer hall."

These lighter strains of his Muse are really the best of all the poet's work; but they are read to-day, if they are read at all, with little appreciation of their beauty. In this matter-of-fact age mankind has far outlived the faith of unreason. The tales of Robin Hood, of Tuck the merry friar, and of Much the Miller, have little interest to us, but they were the delight of Drayton and of his readers. No English poet has excelled him in painting the scenes of fairyland; he describes the situation of Oberon's palace in the air, —

> "And somewhat southward toward the noon,
> Whence lies a way up to the moon,
> And thence the faerie can as soon
> Pass to the earth below it."

He tells, too, of a humorous incident which happened once upon a time in the court of Oberon and Queen Mab, with as lively a fancy as that which produced "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

This bent of the poet's genius is of interest to us in view of the great amount of historical writing which he did in verse. We may feel pretty confident that his heart was not in this latter work as it was in the playful sporting of his fancy. The same thing is to be noticed in the case of several of his fellow poets. Samuel Daniel wasted much of his strength in the same way. Writers of such fine poetic instinct must have felt how little suited was continuous history to poetic treatment; and yet they set themselves to work at the task with heroic fortitude. It is no more than fair to conclude that they were urged to the taking up of such themes as a duty by the sentiment of the times. A patriotic regard for the honor of their country acted as an inspiration. The taste of readers

overruled the judgment of the poet. The born singer was made a literary drudge.

"The Barons' Wars" of Drayton are an example of painstaking composition, in which the skill and talents of the writer are not equal to the task of giving the work any absorbing interest. It is no discredit to the poet that he failed. A recital must have something more for its groundwork than the mere facts of history furnish, or human fancy can invent, to give interest to a poem of one unvarying measure prolonged to six books of from seventy-five to a hundred cantos each. We must, however, conclude that the taste of that period was quite different from that of to-day.

His sturdy loyalty to England led Drayton to undertake, not only the history of his country, but a description of it as well. His chief work, and one which bears the mark of having been a labor of love, the "Poly-Olbion," may be called a practical itinerary of the island. In its descriptive portions the poem displays something of that feeling for Nature which has become a delightful characteristic of more recent literature. But the historical bias of the past predominates. His taste was that of the antiquary. What he reports the Welland as saying, he might have applied to himself: —

> "Antiquity I love; nor by the world's despite
> I cannot be removed from that my dear delight."

Over the hills and along by the streams through the meadows he rambles at will, singing the praises of the rural scene, of the virtues of its inhabitants, or recounting some old legend of the place, or telling some earlier gossip of the neighborhood. The scope of the work enabled the poet to make of it an *omnium gatherum*. It connects English history, fable, and

myth with the spot where it sprang up and grew. The work done by Drayton has no doubt saved more recent poets much groping among the obscure, if not sombre, scenes of their nation's early life. The reader can scarcely help the consciousness that Tennyson and Swinburne have been this way before him.

The poem consists of thirty "songs," as the author calls them, each devoted to some section of the country. It is to be noticed that the excursions of the author are determined largely by the courses of the rivers. A portion of one of the "arguments" to these songs will show the vagrant character of the whole:

> "With Cardigan the muse proceeds,
> And tells what rare things Tivy breeds;
> Next proud Rypillimon she plys,
> Where Severn, Wye, and Rydoll rise.
> With Severn she along doth go,
> Her metamorphosis to show,
> And makes the wandering Wye declaim
> In honor of the British name."

In connection with his account of the Severn the poet touches briefly upon the story of Madoc, brother to David ap Owen, Prince of Wales, who was said by the Welsh to have visited this continent about the year 1170.

> "This brave adventurous youth, in hot pursuit of fame,
> With such as his great spirit did with high deeds inflame,
> Put forth his well-rigged fleet to seek him foreign ground,
> And sailèd west so long until that world he found,
> To Christians then unknown, save this adventurous crew,
> Long ere Columbus lived, or it Vespucius knew."

In the nineteenth song, —

> "When Stour, with Orwell's aid, prefers
> Our British brave sea-voyagers,"

the poet names these worthies, with some mention of their several exploits. The catalogue is too long by far to be given here, but it is of interest to all American readers, since it relates to the time of English discovery and early colonization on this coast. A few of his allusions will answer our present purpose. Charles Leigh, a London merchant, visited Cape Breton in 1597.

"Nor should Fame speak her loud'st of Love, she could not lie,
Who in Virginia left with the English colony,
Himself so bravely bore amongst our people there
That him they only loved, when others they did fear.
Then he who favored still such high attempts as these,
Rawleigh, whose reading made him skilled in all the seas,
Embarked his worthy self and his adventurous crew,
And with a prosperous sail to those fair countries flew.
So Leigh Cape Breton saw, and Ramea's isles again,
As Thompson undertook the voyage to New Spain."

A better idea of the poetic quality of the "Poly-Olbion" will be gained from reading a portion of the author's invocation, or address, to Charnwood. In such passages the poet is particularly happy in his work, and apparently happy in the company of the fair spirits with which his lively fancy peoples the scene: —

"O Charnwood, be thou called the choicest of thy kind:
The like in any place what flood hath happed to find?
No tract in all this isle, the proudest let her be,
Can show a sylvan nymph for beauty like to thee;
The satyrs and the fauns by Dian set to keep
Rough hills and forest holts were sadly seen to weep
When thy high-palmèd harts, the sport of bows and hounds,
By gripple borderers' hands were banishèd thy grounds.
The dryads that were wont about thy lawns to rove,
To trip from wood to wood, and scud from grove to grove,

On Sharpley that were seen, and Cadman's aged rocks,
Against the rising sun to braid their silver locks,
And with the harmless elves, on healthy Bardon's height,
By Cynthia's colder beams to play them night by night,
Exiled their sweet abode, to poor bare commons fled,
They with the oaks that lived, now with the oaks are dead."

XXI.

CYRIL TOURNEUR.

15——.

THE name of Tourneur — or Turner, as it would be written now — has never been one to conjure with. It has gathered nothing of tradition in the course of centuries, — indeed, it has barely survived. This fortune it owes to the circumstance of having been associated with other more enduring names rather than to any potency or magic of its own. Tourneur had a more or less important part in those joint literary undertakings which kept the stage supplied with novelties in the early years of the seventeenth century. It is in connection with the more buoyant names of the old dramatists that his name has floated down the current of time. It is as the literary coworker of Webster, Marston, and others that the student becomes acquainted with Tourneur. When he tries to make out the parts of the work that came from the several hands, he finds the task to be not an easy one. To gather any knowledge of Tourneur as a writer from the plays he helped to produce, is almost impossible.

This leads to a consideration of combined authorship, which has recently come in vogue again. It is rare that co-operative labor has been more successfully employed than it was in the production of dramas

through the associated efforts of playwrights. It is a matter of tradition rather than of record, it is true, that so large a number of the plays which go under the name of Webster, of Marston, or even of Ben Jonson, were largely the work of other hands. The success with which style was cultivated in those days enabled inferior talent to imitate very closely the hand of the master. In this way some very clever writers became humble contributors to an overshadowing reputation. The practice was continued down to the time of Pope, who gave out, as it is reported, entire books of the "Odyssey" to different hands; and the work was so executed that few readers of his Homer now discover any variation in its style or quality.

In the case of co-operative dramatic work, such as Tourneur was engaged upon more or less of his time, it was perfectly natural that the result of the work should be credited to the most prominent or the most popular member of the guild. It is to be feared that in this mutual toil there was very little profit-sharing, either of money returns or of reputation. The principle upon which a settlement of claims was reached appears to have been the convenient mathematical axiom, "The greater includes the less." There was no doubt frequent application of the text, "The disciple is not above his master." A sense of justice, if nothing else, leads the reader of the present to wish that he could assign to the several authors the part each had in the joint production.

As we cannot hope to trace the hand of Tourneur in those works to whose production he is reported to have contributed in some part, we are all the more thankful for the two plays which belong to him alone. These have been edited by Mr. J. C. Collins within a

few years past; and with the Introduction written by that editor, they give about all the information that can be had of this author. The plays were first printed in 1607 and 1608. They may have been performed for some time before they were printed, as it was the usage then to keep plays out of the hands of the printers, and in this way out of the hands of the public, as long as possible. It is therefore reasonable to assign their production to the opening years of the seventeenth century. Fortunately, these plays are of a character to reflect the thought of the period to which they belong, — fortunately, for there is no period in our literary history which needs more to be thoroughly understood.

We are apt to regard English freethinking as an importation from the Continent, and as belonging to the eighteenth century. It is associated with the writings of Shaftesbury and of Bolingbroke. It has been made more conspicuous and much more familiar to most readers in the later and opposing works of Paley and the author of "The Analogy of Revealed Religion to the Constitution and the Course of Nature." An examination of Tourneur's plays, particularly of the earlier one, will show a good deal of thought along lines which were afterwards followed by the freethinkers. However worthless for the purposes of the stage may be "The Atheist's Tragedy," it is not without its interest and value to any reader who would trace the growth of opinions, and who would understand the tone of English thought at the time when the great dramatists were working. A few short extracts will make this point plain. The hero of the play is D'Amville, a nobleman who is led, all too easily for us to respect his intellect, to doubt and to disbelieve all

teachings of religion. One cannot overlook the parallel between this infidelity in the higher circles and that fashionable scepticism of the following century. D'Amville's first interview with a low-bred person shows that atheism was promulgated as a dogma among the lower classes. The gist of the conference is in the following lines: —

> "*Borrachio.* There 's nothing in a man above
> His nature; if there were, considering 't is
> His being's excellency, 't would not yield
> To Nature's weakness.
> *D'Amville.* Then if death casts up
> Our total sum of joy and happiness,
> Let me have all my senses feasted in
> Th' abundant fulness of delight at once,
> And with a sweet, insensible increase
> Of pleasing surfeit, melt into my dust."

This play has been pronounced faulty in representing D'Amville as too easily led into scepticism. May it not be the case that the poet found the gentility of his time strongly inclined towards atheistic principles, and easily impelled in that direction? However that may be, the predisposing cause is such as arrests the attention of the reader at once. It was necessary to have a Puritan on the stage to amuse the groundlings. The author makes this Puritan, with his excess of piety, or cant, the occasion of the nobleman's losing faith. No critic, looking at the composition of human nature, can pronounce this an unnatural joining of cause and effect. It is one of the severest and most striking comments upon Puritanism to be found in contemporary literature. Here we see how D'Amville was impressed by the conversation of the Puritan who had just left the stage: —

"*D'Am.* Borrachio, didst precisely note this man?
Bor. His own profession would report him pure.
D'Am. And seems to know if any benefit
Arises of religion after death.
Yet but compare 's profession with his life, —
They so directly contradict themselves
As if the end of his instructions were
But to direct the world from sin, that he
More easily might engross it to himself.
By that I am confirmed an atheist."

If D'Amville is to be considered as typical of the upper-class gentry of the day; if his pliant and over-fastidious temper represents the bearing of the intelligent classes towards the more serious questions of life and duty, — does not "The Atheist's Tragedy" help us the better to understand such a play as "Hamlet"? It may be objected to this that D'Amville is a Frenchman. The answer to this will be simply to remind one that Hamlet was a Dane, and that in dealing with generalities the dramatist presents particular examples. Without dwelling longer on this view of the matter, here is another passage which connects the atheism of that day with certain materialistic notions of the present. After the execution of his nephew, the atheist begs of the judges the dead body, that he may upon dissection discover, if possible, the physiological grounds of nobility of character.

"*D'Am.* A boon, my lords, I beg a boon.
First Judge. What 's that, my lord?
D'Am. His body, when 't is dead,
For an anatomy.
Second Judge. For what, my lord?
D'Am. Your understanding still comes short of mine.
I would find out by his anatomy
What thing there is in nature more exact
Than in the constitution of myself.
Methinks my parts and my dimensions are

As many, as large, as well composed as his;
And yet in me the resolution wants
To die with that assurance as he does.
The cause of that in his anatomy
I would find out."

Tourneur's Puritan is but a caricature, and most likely that was what the author designed. Still, the picture has its value. It must have been drawn so as to be easily recognized. He is given the offensive name of Snuffe, from contempt, and apparently to ridicule the practice of the Puritan of humbly referring to himself as a candle of the Lord. The meanness of this character is brought out in an examination before the court:

"*Second Judge.* Now, Monsieur Snuffe! a man of your profession
Found in a place of such impiety!

Snuffe. I grant you, the place is full of impurity. So much the more need of instruction and reformation. The purpose that carried me thither was with the spirit of conversion to purify their uncleanness; and I hope your Lordship will say the law cannot take hold of me for that.

First Judge. No, sir, it cannot; but yet give me leave
To tell you that I hold your wary answer
Rather premeditated for excuse,
Than spoken out of a religious purpose.
Where took you your degree of scholarship?

Snuffe. I am no scholar, my lord. To speak the truth, sincere truth, I am Snuffe, the tallow-chandler.

Second Judge. How comes your habit to be altered thus?

Snuffe. My Lord Belforest, taking a delight in the cleanness of my conversation, withdrew me from that unclean life, and put me in a garment fit for his society and my present profession.

First Judge. His Lordship did but paint a rotten post,
Or cover foulness fairly. Monsieur Snuffe,
Back to your candle-making! You may give
The world more light with that, than either with
Instruction or the example of your life.

Snuffe. Thus the Snuffe is put out."

Of the two plays which we have as the authenticated work of Tourneur, "The Revenger's Tragedy" is the one that is most commended by critics for its dramatic interest and the vigor of its language. All this may be admitted, and yet the reader at this day may find that "The Atheist's Tragedy" helps to a far better insight into the habits of thought and the tone of feeling in England, at the time of its production, than would a dozen plays like its companion piece. As a specimen of this author at his best may be taken the announcement of the death of Charlemont, made by Borrachio. The want of propriety in putting such poetic language into the mouth of a blackguard, who was at that very time telling a falsehood, need not take away anything from the elegance and beauty of the passage.

"Walking next day upon the fatal shore,
Among the slaughtered bodies of their men,
Which the full-stomached sea had cast upon
The sands, 't was my unhappy chance to light
Upon a face whose favor, when it lived,
My astonished mind informed me I had seen.
He lay in 's armor as if that had been
His coffin; and the weeping sea like one
Whose milder temper doth lament the death
Of him whom in his rage he slew, runs up
The shore, embraces him, kisses his cheeks,
Goes back again, and forces up the sands
To bury him, and every time it parts,
Sheds tears upon him, till at last (as if
It could no more endure to see the man
Whom it had slain, yet loth to leave him) with
A kind of unresolved, unwilling pace,
Winding her waves one in another, like
A man that folds his arms or wrings his hands
For grief, ebbed from the body, and descends
As if it would sink down into the earth,
And hide itself for shame of such a deed."

XXII.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.

1564?–1593.

THE name of Marlowe comes earliest in the list of English dramatists. It comes little short of standing among the foremost of these for excellence as well. In the thirty years of the poet's life, between 1564 and 1593, only the last ten years of which could have been given to work, he produced what should have secured a lasting reputation. But the reputation gained has suffered both justly and unjustly. It has suffered justly from having the author's original work associated with translations which Marlowe should never have undertaken, or if he made these simply as exercises by which to acquire skill in versification, he should have kept them from the press. His selections were from the loosest passages of Ovid, and the translator often went wickedly astray to give a worse meaning to what was already too bad for any literature. Seeing this tendency of Marlowe's mind, it is matter of surprise to find his tragedies freer from what is offensive than are those of any other Elizabethan playwright.

Another circumstance from which the literary reputation of Marlowe has suffered very heavily, and with justice, too, is the reflection upon it from his personal

character. He appears also to have been upon the stage at one time, and that was enough to condemn a man in those days. He was one of a clique with Nash and Greene, who were dreaded or despised in London. But it was the notorious scandal of Marlowe's death that effectually blasted the credit of his life. His death by violence barely saved him from becoming a murderer; he was killed in a street-brawl which he rushed into with the design of assassinating an enemy.

It must have been a very undesirable literary reputation that would not have suffered from what has been related of Marlowe. More than this, however, it has been the hard fortune of this name to have to bear.

It is pretty clear that the author has been confounded with one of his characters. We find him spoken of as a reckless atheist, — as one who had sold his soul to the devil for certain instructions and privileges. As a ballad-writer of his day describes him:

> "This man did his owne God denie,
> And Christ his onlie son,
> And did all punishment defie,
> So he his course might run."

There is nothing in Marlowe's writings from which such a conclusion could be fairly drawn. But he had dramatized the old legendary story of Doctor Faustus, and the ballad exactly applies to that character. It was a case of mistaken identity, and the mistake was a most stupid one. Does it seem to any one too gross a blunder even for a ballad-writer? There is little difficulty in finding its parallel. During the Middle Ages, Virgil was regarded as a magician. He was reported to have called up the spirits of the dead, and to have

visited the lower world. The only foundation for such a story was the poetic sending of his hero to those regions in the sixth book of the "Æneid."

Along with this strange mishap to Marlowe's reputation, it is a pleasant thing to note that a wayward fortune sometimes favored him. Nearly a hundred years after the poet's day, a contemplative man, taking his recreation in giving to the world "The Compleat Angler," took occasion to mention with delighted approval the simple and harmless pastoral of "The Passionate Shepherd to his Love:" and from this time on, this trifle of Marlowe's was immortal. No matter how broad or how narrow may be the plan upon which a collection of English verse may be made, it always contains Izaak Walton's favorite.

The study of the poet's works will prove more agreeable than the contemplation either of his character or of his life. His first play was the tragedy of "Tamburlaine the Great," in two parts. This is the earliest English tragedy in blank verse, with occasional rhymed couplets, and formed upon the model which has held the popular favor to the present time. It was an ambitious attempt for any writer, and the success of the youthful poet certainly does credit to his talent. It is an easy matter to criticise the performance from any point of view nearer our own time, for it was to be eclipsed within a very few years by Shakspeare's work; but if we do the author the simple justice of comparing his work only with what had gone before it, we shall find occasion for nothing but praise.

The reader of the tragedy will see at once that Tamburlaine engrosses a disproportionate share of the dialogue. It is not in keeping with the purposes of the stage, nor with the proprieties of ordinary intercourse.

There are two ways of accounting for this want of symmetry. Poets had been accustomed, from Homer's day downward, to present their heroes conspicuous for some one virtue. Odysseus was the man of infinite resource, and Æneas was everywhere the devoted. Chaucer's patient Griselle was only that virtue personified. Influenced by the traditions of the past, Marlowe would naturally feel that he could not possibly draw a character that should actually out-brag the arrogant Tartar chief.

Another explanation of the matter can be found. The play may have been written to order, as it were. The part of Tamburlaine may have been designed to suit the talent of some popular actor of the day, such as Alleyn has the reputation of having been. This player would be expected to monopolize all the attention and the interest of the spectators. The support would be of little account. Thus the permanent and essential in literature would be sacrificed to the whim of popular fancy and the fashion of histrionic art. In the particular instance now under our view, the latter theory seems the more reasonable one.

A glance at the play will reveal Marlowe's peculiar treatment of his subject. In the first act, before Tamburlaine has set out upon his career of conquest, he closes a long and persuasive argument to induce a Persian nobleman to take part in the enterprise, with these lines: —

> "Jove sometime masked in a shepherd's weed;
> And by those steps that he hath scaled the heavens
> May we become immortal as the gods.
> Join with me now in this my mean estate
> (I call it mean because, being yet obscure,
> The nations far removed admire me not),
> And when my name and honor shall be spread

As far as Boreas claps his brazen wings,
Or fair Boötes sends his cheerful light,
Then shalt thou be competitor with me,
And sit with Tamburlaine in all his majesty."

The rhythm of this, as of all Marlowe's verse, runs on as smoothly as if our language had even then been polished by the skill and taste of Milton. The rhyme at the close is common, but the lengthening of the last line by an extra foot is unusual. It ends the passage with an easy cadence well suited to the dignity of the thought. One will also note with what easy flight the poet's fancy makes an excursion into regions rarely penetrated by human interests. This is done by way of amplification, and is the least offensive form of Tartar boasting. As a display of the poet's faculty, it is made highly attractive, and it becomes the most frequent ornament of Marlowe's verse. A good example is found in these lines addressed by Tamburlaine to his comrades whom he has seated upon conquered thrones :

" You that have marched with happy Tamburlaine
As far as from the frozen place of heaven
Unto the watery morning's ruddy bower,
And thence by land unto the torrid zone,
Deserve these titles I endow you with
By valor and by magnanimity.
Your births shall be no blemish to your fame ;
For virtue is the fount whence honor springs,
And they are worthy she investeth kings."

There is a difficulty in quoting from Marlowe. The speeches are apt to be too long, and even single sentences are much involved. Some idea of the force of his language may be gained from what the hero says to the captive sultan, —

" The god of war resigns his room to me,
Meaning to make me general of the world ;

Jove viewing me in arms, looks pale and wan,
Fearing my power should pull him from his throne.
Where'er I come, the Fatal Sisters sweat,
And grisly Death, by running to and fro,
To do their ceaseless homage to my sword.
. . . . . .
Millions of souls sit on the banks of Styx,
Waiting the back-return of Charon's boat;
Hell and Elysium swarm with ghosts of men
That I have sent from sundry foughten fields,
To spread my fame through hell and up to heaven."

"The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus" was founded upon an early legendary story of a learned man who sold himself to Satan that he might become skilled in the arts of magic. The story appears to belong to the Middle Ages, when a belief in witchcraft was common, and when astrology was seriously studied. This play connects the modern drama with the early mysteries and moralities. The same story is the basis of Goethe's "Faust." Of the two versions, Marlowe's is the better. It conforms more nearly to the early diabolical idea. The poet did not try to engraft upon that notion any polite scampishness of modern life. The introduction of the Good Angel and the Evil Angel at different points, the one trying to dissuade Faust from his purpose, the other drawing him on to his ruin, adds to the effectiveness with which the play could be presented. That Goethe's "Faust" should suit the German is perfectly matter of course; but its popularity among English readers must be due to the circumstance that Marlowe's version is not generally known.

In this play Mephistophiles is the business agent of Satan, and he conducts himself as a gentleman throughout all their intercourse. Upon his first appearance he

plainly tells Faust that the conjuring of the latter has had nothing to do directly with his visit. A portion of that first interview will show his character.

"*Faust.* But, leaving these vain trifles of men's souls,
Tell me what is that Lucifer, thy lord?
Meph. Arch-regent and commander of all spirits.
Faust. Was not that Lucifer an angel once?
Meph. Yes, Faustus, and most dearly loved of God.
Faust. How comes it, then, that he is prince of devils?
Meph. Oh, by aspiring pride and insolence,
For which God threw him from the face of heaven.
Faust. And what are you that live with Lucifer?
Meph. Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer,
Conspired against our God with Lucifer,
And are forever damned with Lucifer.
Faust. Where are you damned?
Meph. In hell.
Faust. How comes it, then, that thou art out of hell?
Meph. Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it;
Think'st thou that I, who saw the face of God,
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells,
In being deprived of everlasting bliss?
Oh, Faustus, leave these frivolous demands,
Which strike a terror to my fainting soul!"

All this is straightforward and business-like. Goethe's spectacular effects are tawdry by comparison. Milton works into his "Paradise Lost" much of the material which this play affords.

Marlowe's historical play of "Edward the Second" is even less adapted to the stage than those we have mentioned. It shows, however, more of the poet's manner. In greeting the king, Gaveston says, —

> "The shepherd, nipt with biting winter's rage,
> Frolics not more to see the painted spring
> Than I do to behold your Majesty."

The king soliloquizes in regard to his rebellious nobles, —

> "Edward, unfold thy paws,
> And let their lives'-blood slake thy fury's hunger."

The queen, lamenting her husband's wandering affections, exclaims, —

> "Oh that mine arms could close this isle about,
> That I might pull him to me where I would!"

In view of what followed in the political history of England, the following passage from this play, which was written before 1593, reads much like a prophecy. Were we to meet with anything like it in the ancient writers, we should strongly suspect it to be an interpolation. It is spoken by the younger Mortimer after he has gained the ascendency in the government:

> "They thrust upon me the protectorship,
> And sue to me for that that I desire;
> While at the council-table, grave enough,
> And not unlike a bashful Puritan,
> First I complain of imbecility,
> Saying it is *onus quam gravissimum;*
> Till, being interrupted by my friends,
> *Suscepi* that *provinciam*, as they term it;
> And, to conclude, I am Protector now."

In this instance Marlowe wrote into the history of the first half of the fourteenth century, as an accomplished fact, what must have been but the remotest aspiration of the political reformers of his own time.

XXIII.

THOMAS MIDDLETON.

1570?–1627.

MIDDLETON belongs to the time of Shakspeare. His generation was that of the dramatists, and all his life long he was of that school of composition. The date of his birth is not exactly known, but as he was publishing before 1600, editors have assumed with a good degree of probability that he was born about 1570. Mr. Dyce was able to establish the time of his death by finding the record of his burial, on July 4, 1627. The number of his plays that have come down to our time is sufficient to prove that the years between the time when he began to print, in 1597, to the time of his death, were busy years of literary work. There is, however, one circumstance to be taken into account when we are judging of the industry and copiousness of such a writer, and that is, that we often find him associated with other writers of the same school in the production of a play; and it is not always easy, or even at times possible, to make out where the credit or the discredit, as the case may be, rightfully belongs. This co-operative system of labor seems to have been adopted simply for the sake of despatch when the managers and the public were eager for a new play. In these literary partnerships Middleton is found asso-

ciated with Webster, Dekker, Drayton, and Rowley; sometimes with two or three of them in the same play.

Several editions of Middleton's works have appeared within the last forty years. In this respect his reputation is particularly fortunate. Any editor who expends so much labor upon an author as Mr. Dyce or Mr. Bullen have spent upon this one, is likely to discover a good deal that is really praiseworthy in so large a body of literature. Indeed, it is natural to suppose that such an editor was acquainted with many points of excellence before undertaking the work. The judgment of such a person is authoritative. His editors have given Middleton rank with the second-rate dramatists, as Webster, Heywood, Chapman, Massinger, and so on. No one will dispute the correctness of this judgment, only it will do no harm to stop and reflect that the work of a dramatist is to be looked at from two distinct points of view, and that these points are to be taken on opposite sides of the subject. It will be admitted by all who have observed what qualities in a play contribute to its popular success that a drama may be effective on the stage, and yet prove dull reading. It may be a good play and poor literature, and it may be just the contrary. The one test is quite independent of the other. For this reason comparisons are least satisfactory of all among the dramatists.

If, however, Middleton is to rank with those of his fellows with whom he has been classed, it is as a playwright, and not as a poet. In the former character we have no occasion to speak of him here. It is with his work as a part of our literature that we are now concerned. Considered simply as a poet, he falls to a lower rank than that of the second place among the poets of his age. He is inferior to those who have

been named in connection with him. Whether this is to be accounted for on the score of inferior abilities, or because of the stress of circumstances, which forced him to work in haste, it is not easy now to decide. The point is one all the more difficult to decide because of the very unequal merit of his page. There are passages to be met here and there, at long intervals, which give promise of poetic excellence; but the promise is sadly broken in a very few lines. One can find little to quote for its beauty of composition or for its nobility of sentiment. The lyric parts of his plays and masques are far below the songs of his fellow writers. The traditional reputation of the man must rest mainly upon the skill with which his plays are fitted to the stage.

But there is one respect in which Middleton is of more interest to readers in this country than is any other poet of his time: this is the frequency in his plays of allusions to America, or to the religious and political circumstances of English life which were directly operating to swell the tide of emigration to these shores. The value of these notices is not one whit the less for the reason that the author was a narrow, bigoted partisan, incapable of one hearty, patriotic impulse such as throbs in the literature of the age. His scorn of Puritan ideas and of Puritan ways is honest, and we may take this as the sentiment of the theatre-going public of the time. That it should prove a potent agency in hastening the settlement of these colonies is the most natural thing in the world.

The earliest mention of America which I find in the plays of Middleton occurs in "Blurt, Master Constable," which was printed in 1602. It is merely by the way, and contains no implied disrespect. Lazarillo says to the spectators, "If I were to make

a discovery of any new-found land, as Virginia or so, to ladies and courtiers, my speech should hoist up sails fit to bear up such lofty and well-rigged vessels." Nine years later, in "The Roaring Girl," which was licensed in 1611, we find an allusion to the haste with which colonists were then coming over. Moll says to Sir Alexander: "Take deliberation, sir; never choose a wife as if you were going to Virginia."

In "The Family of Love," which was licensed Oct. 12, 1607, there is a little skit at the dislike of music which characterized the Puritans. Act iii. scene 3, one of the characters says: "Organs? . . . I detest 'em. I hope my body has no organs." This little joke was often repeated in the theatres. In Marmion's "Five Companions," 1633, it is said of a Puritan, "He was out of love with his own members, because they were called organs." Again, in the "Royal Slave" of Cartwright, which was performed before Charles I. and the queen at Oxford, 1636, Coster proposes, among other annoying attentions to the Puritans, to —

> "Give organs to each parish in the kingdom,
> And so root out the unmusical elect."

The joke was one of the best the Cavaliers presented; and the persistence with which they repeated it shows a certain degree of taste.

The personal allusions to the Puritans were less scrupulous of propriety. In the play of Middleton's called "A Trick to Catch the Old One," which was licensed Oct. 7, 1607, one of Witgood's creditors says to him, "Do you call us devils? You shall find us Puritans." In "The Family of Love," which was licensed, as we have seen, only five days later, Middleton is commonly supposed to have satirized the Fami-

lists, — a sect distinct from the Puritans; but that he had the latter in mind is plain from this observation in act iii. scene 2: "Love 's as proper to a courtier as preciseness to a Puritan." In the scene which follows there is a caricature of a sectary which, if it does not there apply to the Puritans, was often enough exhibited afterwards as a portraiture of the sect. It will occur to the reader as familiar in Butler's "Hudibras," in Cleveland, and elsewhere till after the Restoration. I have not met with it earlier than in Middleton, but am much inclined to think that it was already commonplace enough in his day. The devout scoundrel of the piece says, "You shall hear how far I am entered in the right way already. First, I live in charity and give small alms to such as be not of the right sect; I take under twenty i' th' hundred, nor no forfeiture of bonds unless the laws tell my conscience I may do 't; I set no pot a' Sundays, but feed on cold meat drest a' Saturdays; I keep no holydays nor fasts, but eat most flesh o' Fridays of all days i' the week; I do use to say inspired graces, able to starve a wicked man with length; I have Aminadabs and Abrahams to my godsons, and I chide them when they ask me blessing; and I do hate the red letter more than I follow the written verity." The "red letter" has reference either to the directions in the prayer-book, or to the Church festivals, as these were marked in the calendar.

The animus of the playwright comes out in "A Mad World, my Masters," which was licensed Oct. 4, 1608. Speaking of players, Sir Bounteous says: "They were never more uncertain in their lives; now up and now down; they know not when to play, where to play, nor what to play: not when to play, for fearful fools;

where to play, for Puritan fools; nor what to play, for critical fools."

It is, however, in "The Mayor of Quinborough" that the bitterness of Middleton towards the Puritans is exhibited most fully. This play was first published in 1660–61. The time when it was licensed is not known. This event has been referred to different years between 1601 and 1621. It would be of interest to know just when it was written; but the date concerns us less when we reflect upon the chances of the play having been reconstructed at different times to suit it to the changing sentiments of the people or condition of the realm. The author himself gives a hint of these adaptations in his preface to "The Roaring Girl." He says: "The fashion of play-making I can properly compare to nothing so naturally as the alteration in apparel." The publisher of the play, in his Address to the Reader, recommends "The Mayor of Quinborough" with an allusion which would connect Oliver of the play with Cromwell; but this could not be, unless this character were introduced after Middleton's death. It is more likely that this is a publisher's trick to secure readers.

The part of the play which most interests us is act v. scene i. The characters are Simon, or Simonides, the mayor; Aminadab, his servant; Glover, an official; and a company of Cheaters. A disturbance in the street is heard in the mayor's office.

"*Sim.* What joyful throat
Is that, Aminadab? What is the meaning of this cry?
Amin. The rebel is taken.
Sim. Oliver the Puritan?
Amin. Oliver, Puritan, and fustian-weaver altogether.
Sim. Fates, I thank you for this victorious day!
Bonfires of pease-straw burn; let the bells ring.

Glov. There 's two in mending, and you know they cannot.
Sim. 'Las! the tenor 's broken; ring out the treble.

[*Oliver is brought in.*

I am o'ercloyed with joy; welcome, thou rebel!
Oliv. I scorn thy welcome, I —
Sim. Art thou yet so stout?
Wilt thou not stoop for grace? Then get thee out.
Oliv. I was not born to stoop but to my loom;
That seized upon, my stooping days are done.
In plain terms, if thou hast anything to say to me,
Send me away quickly; this is no biding-place.
I understand there are players in thy house.
Despatch me, I charge thee, in the name of all
The brethren.
Sim. Nay, now proud rebel, I will make thee stay,
And to thy greater torment see a play.
Oliv. Oh, devil, I conjure thee by Amsterdam.
Sim. Our word is past,
Justice may wink awhile, but see at last.

[*The play begins.*

Hold, stop him, stop him!
Oliv. Oh, that profane trumpet! oh, oh!
Sim. Set him down there, I charge you, officers.
Oliv. I 'll hide my ears and stop my eyes.
Sim. Down with his golls [hands], I charge you.
Oliv. Oh, tyranny, tyranny, revenge it, tribulation!
For rebels there are many deaths; but sure the only way
To execute a Puritan is seeing of a play.
Oh, I shall swound!
Sim. Which if thou dost, to spite thee,
A player's boy shall bring thee *aqua vitæ*.

Enter First Cheater.

Oliv. Oh, I 'll not swoon at all for 't, though I die.
Sim. Peace! here 's a rascal list and edify.
First Cheat. I say still, he 's an ass that cannot live by his wits.
Sim. What a bold rascal 's this?
He calls us all asses at first dash·
Sure none of us live by our wits, unless it be
Oliver, the Puritan.

Oliv. I scorn as much to live by my wits
As the proudest of you all.
Sim. Why, then, you 're an ass for company;
So hold your prating."

It would prove tiresome to follow farther Middleton's quarrel with the Puritans. He may be regarded as the champion of the drama in its decline. Just one bit of fancy will serve to show what the poet might have given us if the conditions of his life had led him into other poetic ways. The following is good: —

"Upon those lips, the sweet, fresh buds of youth,
The holy dew of prayer lies, like pearl
Dropt from the opening eyelids of the morn
Upon a bashful rose."

XXIV.

JOHN MARSTON.

1575–1634.

MARSTON'S literary life was a brief one; it lasted for not more than five or six years. Just how it began or just how it ended is not easy, if possible, now to be learned. The inscription "*Oblivioni Sacrum*" on the stone that bears the name of John Marston in the churchyard of Temple Church in London, is now as applicable to the personal and literary life of the author as to the dust beneath. But short as was the career of the writer, it fell within the era of the supremacy of letters; it was coincident with the vanishing of the Elizabethan age. The time of Marston fell in as well with the turning-point in the fortunes of the stage. He has his share in both the glory and the shame of the drama. Just what proportion of either is his inheritance, a late generation will not be curious to inquire. Upon one point the reader of the poet will have a positive conviction, — that it was not through want of vigor of thought or of expression that this writer contributed to the decline of literature.

Marston was born about 1575. His mother was Mary Guarsi, or Guarsie, whose ancestors had come into England from Genoa. This circumstance is of interest as showing from what source the son might have

inherited tastes so unlike his father's, and it also furnishes a plausible reason for his choosing Italian plots and characters for his plays. His father was a lawyer of the Middle Temple. He had evidently hoped and planned that his son should follow the same calling, for in his will, made in 1599, these bequests are named: "My furniture, etc., in my chambers in the Middle Temple, my law books, etc., to my said son, whom I hoped would have profited by them in the study of the law; but man proposeth, and God disposeth." This closing reflection occurs to the poet himself in one of his latest plays, "What You Will," act i. section 1:

> "*Randulfo.* As we see the son of a divine
> Seldom proves preacher, or a lawyer's son
> Rarely a pleader (for they strive to run
> A various fortune from their ancestors)."

At the date of his father's will, 1599, the young poet was suffering, as his reputation has suffered ever since, from the indiscretions of his satires, "The Scourge of Villanie" and "Pygmalion's Image," which were published the year before. Bishop Hall, Ben Jonson, and other literary magnates who had received uncomplimentary notice at the hands of Marston, repaid the debt in kind, with interest at a rate that would, in these days, seem usurious. A comparison of dates brings to light a curious custom of the time. Bishop Hall's counter attack was published earlier than the offending satires of Marston. These latter must have been read or have circulated pretty freely in manuscript among those literary coteries of the town, to which a bright young fellow from the universities had easy access.

"Pygmalion's Image" was called in by the censor and destroyed. Referring to this action, the poet makes the customary defence of himself, —

> "Hence, thou misjudging censor; know I wrote
> Those idle rhymes to note the odious spot
> And blemish that deforms the lineaments
> Of modern Poesie's habiliments."

We too can echo the poet's "hence" to the censor, but we will not call him "misjudging;" on the contrary, we will so far sanction his decision as to beg that he will be good enough to take himself off, with all the scurrilous personalities that were bandied in the narrow and irritable circles of piety and of poetry.

Marston's dramatic career extended only from 1602 to 1607. These five years must have been busy ones, and for a young man between his twenty-fifth and thirtieth years, they show work of great promise. The subsequent life of the poet until his death, in 1634, is purely a matter of conjecture. It is surmised, however, that he entered the church. Such a course was not unlikely. Supposing this conjecture a well-founded one, the question naturally arises as to how he held himself with reference to the growing Puritan sentiment of the time. There are two circumstances that give our mind a leaning towards the guess that he might have been a Nonconformist. His early encounter with Bishop Hall would have little weight in itself; but when we take it into account together with a bequest in the will of Marston's widow, it lends a color of probability to this view. The widow left in her will "To my revered pastor, Master Edward Calamy, six angels, as a token of my respect." Calamy was a well-known Puritan divine.

It is only as an author that Marston is known to us, and in that character it is only as a writer of tragedy that he will interest us His comedies and his satires are beneath serious notice. One play of his is of a

mixed nature, and this circumstance may have been good reason for giving it the title, "What you Will." In his tragedy, however, he is easily compared with Shakspeare. The comparison is at times so obvious as to impress the reader with the notion of direct appropriation. Putting the passages alongside each other, we are more inclined to think that the youthful dramatist betrays a close and appreciative study of his master, and that he rests on well-poised pinions in his attempts to reach the same airy heights. Take, for example, the lines in "Hamlet:" —

> "But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
> Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill,"

and read after it from Marston's "Antonio and Mellida," act iii. scene i: —

> "Is not yon gleam the shuddering morn that flakes
> With silver tincture the east verge of heaven?"

"Et vitula tu dignus et hic," must be the verdict of every reader of taste.

The younger poet at times enlarges upon the thought of his master; and though the attempt may show his unequal strength, it proves that he knew and appreciated a good thing. King Henry VI. declares, —

> "What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted!
> Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just,
> And he but naked, though locked up in steel,
> Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted."

Marston's hero reflects, —

> "Andrugio lives, and a fair cause of arms, —
> Why, that 's an army all invincible!
> He who hath that hath a battalion,
> Royal armor of proof, huge troops of barbed steeds,
> Main squares of pikes, millions of arquebus.
> Oh, a fair cause stands firm and will abide;
> Legions of angels fight upon her side."

Fancy was Marston's richest gift. It was delicate, as fancy must ever be, and it was cultivated by the study both of Nature and of Art. A few instances where night is fancifully introduced will best give an idea of the poet's power in this direction. Antonio says to Mellida, —

> "And thou and I will live
> Like unmatched mirrors of calamity;
> The jealous ear of night eave-drops our talk."

This passage is rarely equalled. I have met with the last line quoted by itself; but such an act seems sacrilege. No one who has ever read the lines together, and understood the propriety of their use, would ever separate them. Another example of the poet's bold and easy flight is this: —

> "Ere night shall close the lids of yon bright stars"

This vigorous fancy helps the dramatist to a wealth of life-giving epithets. In his tragedy of "Sophonisba" the heroine says to Zanthia, —

> "Love's wings so justly heave
> The body up, that as our toes shall trip
> Over the tender and obedient grass,
> Scarce any drop of dew is dashed to ground.
> And see! the willing shade of friendly night
> Makes safe our instant haste."

The reader cannot fail to admire here the grace and propriety with which the writer passes from the physical to the metaphysical in choosing the epithets "tender" and "obedient," and how he fits the ideas of willingness and friendliness to the circumstances of the proposed flight.

This tragedy of "Sophonisba" is Marston's strongest work. It had historical basis for its plot; it grew out of the quarrel between Carthage and Rome. Inci-

dents in abundance were ready to the writer's hand. The characters were chiefly familiar ones in the history of the period. At a time when the memory of the Spanish Armada was recent, there were many circumstances calculated to bring the sight of a nation fighting for existence very near the hearts of Englishmen. The poet presents his heroine in a strong light before the Numidian Masinissa: —

"Sophonisba, —
A name for misery much known, — 't is she
Entreats of thy graced sword this only boon:
Let me not kneel to Rome; for though no cause
Of mine deserves their hate, though Masinissa
Be ours to heart, yet Roman generals
Make proud their triumphs with whatever captives.
Oh, 't is a nation which from soul I fear,
As one well knowing the much-grounded hate
They bear to Hasdrubal and Carthage blood;
Therefore with tears that wash thy feet, with hands
Unused to beg, I clasp thy manly knees;
Oh, save me from their fetters and contempt,
Their proud insults and more than insolence!
Or if it be not in thy grace of breath
To grant such freedom, give me long-wished death."

That nondescript performance of Marston's to which reference has already been made under the title, "What you Will," contains a passage worthy of notice. It is the fling of a poet and a wit at the more serious speculations of philosophers and divines. Aside from its bearing on the question as to whether or not the author qualified himself to take orders, this bit of badinage reads as though it were reluctantly forced into the composition. It appears to be an adaptation of an earlier piece of wit. Only slight changes would be needed to fit it to times much nearer our own. The gist of the skit is in this passage: —

"Nay, mark, list Delight.
Delight, my spaniel, slept whilst I baused leaves,
Tossed o'er the dunces, pored on the old print
Of titled words, — and still my spaniel slept;
Whilst I wasted lamp-oil, bated my flesh,
Shrunk up my veins, — and still my spaniel slept;
And still I held converse with Zabarell,
Aquinas, Scotus, and the musty saw
Of antique Donate, — still my spaniel slept.
Still on went I; first *an sit anima*,
Then, and it were mortal. Oh, hold, hold!
At that they are at brain buffets, fell by the ears
Amain, pell-mell together, — still my spaniel slept.
Then, whether 't were corporeal, local, fixed,
Extraduce; but whether 't had free will
Or no, ho, philosophers
Stood banding factions all so strongly propped.
I staggered, knew not which was firmer part,
But thought, quoted, read, observed, and pried,
Stuffed noting-books, — and still my spaniel slept.
At length he waked and yawned, and by yon sky,
For aught I know, he knew as much as I."

XXV.

THOMAS HEYWOOD.

1576?–1626.

IF one were to name any single writer as particularly representative of the life and sentiment of the Elizabethan age, he could not well mention any with greater confidence than Thomas Heywood. Of the personal history of Heywood we know little. The date either of his birth or his death is not to be learned. The circumstance that plays of his were printed before 1600 warrants biographers in referring the former event to a time so early as 1570. In a similar way it is ascertained that he lived on through the reign of James, and perhaps he saw the end of Charles's reign. Contemporary authors furnish few notices of the man, though when he is mentioned it is with respect. He was himself indifferent to the publication of his plays, and these have not received at later hands the attention they deserve. Scholars have given all their study to his fellow playwright, Shakspeare.

But Heywood was intensely patriotic, in keeping with the prevailing sentiment of his time. English history furnished him incidents for his plays, and all his characters were true Englishmen. The life he depicts is the hearty, vigorous life of his period. In the evident purpose to interest, instruct, and influence the popular

sentiment of the age, his dramas resemble the earlier miracle-plays and narratives. With this design to affect the current of events, the plays would naturally and necessarily lack perpetuating qualities. Just as naturally they would have interest and value to the one who should in the future care to learn what life was being lived in England at the time when the literature of that country was most enriched with works of genius. The subsequent neglect of Heywood should detract not at all from the merit which he sought to attain, nor should it be taken as evidence of worthlessness on the part of his works. It can be satisfactorily accounted for by saying that he wrote expressly and exclusively for his people and his generation. Such an explanation must at least secure respect for the author as a man.

That Heywood wrote for his time, and not for ours, we can learn by reading no farther than the preface to one of his later plays. In this he says,—

"Though some have used a double sale of their labors, first to the stage, and after to the press, for my own part, I here proclaim myself ever faithful to the first, and never guilty of the last. Yet since some of my plays have (unknown to me, and without any of my direction) accidentally come into the printer's hands, and therefore so corrupt and mangled (copied only by the ear) that I have been as unable to know them as ashamed to challenge them, this, therefore, I was the willinger to furnish out in his native habit; first being by consent, next because the rest have been so wronged in being published in such savage and ragged ornaments."

These remarks of Heywood's are instructive on more than one point. Not only do they show the author's indifference to posterity, but they also make

plain the manner in which some of his plays first got into circulation. When he says that these were "copied only by the ear," he must be understood to mean that skilled writers attended upon the performances at the theatres, and took the words of the actors very much after the manner of modern reporters. The preface, moreover, explains how it happened that of the two hundred and twenty plays which the author elsewhere tells us he wrote of himself or in chief part, only about a tenth part have come down to our hands.

It may be as well to say first as last that Heywood either failed to appreciate the few essential requirements of dramatic composition, or else he disregarded these for what would prove more effective. He may safely be called a story-telling playwright. His more important historical plays come very near being epics. A single composition embraces the events of a score or more of years all related in the order of their occurrence, showing no more of the distinctive character of tragedy or comedy than would a chapter of general history. His "Queen Elizabeth," for example, consists of two parts: the first detailing her life up to the time of her accession to the throne; the second giving the events of her long reign.

In this play of "Queen Elizabeth" the poet joins with the grave divines and jurists of that day in extolling the virtues and the graces of England's sovereign. But perhaps the best thing in the way of compliment to her Majesty is to be found in "The Fair Maid of the West." The fair maid who is the heroine of that piece bears the name of Bess, and she is the typical girl of the period. Thoroughly English in all her opinions and feelings, the playwright contrives to have her visit the king of Fez, and he furnishes occasion for her to

express her sentiments fully at the royal table. Upon learning that his guest bears the name Elizabeth, he exclaims, —

> " There 's virtue in that name.
> The virgin queen, so famous through the world,
> The mighty empress of the maiden isle,
> Whose predecessors have o'errun great France,
> Whose powerful hand doth still support the Dutch,
> And keeps the potent king of Spain in awe,
> Is not she titled so ?
> *Bess.* She is.
> *King.* Hath she herself a face so fair as yours,
> When she appears for wonder ?
> *Bess.* Mighty Fez,
> You cast a blush upon my maiden cheek,
> To pattern me with her. Why, England's queen,
> She is the only Phœnix of her age,
> The pride and glory of the Western Isles.
> Had I a thousand tongues, they all would tire,
> And fail me in her true description."

This play, " The Fair Maid of the West," though discursive to a degree and of very uneven quality, yet contains passages characteristic of Heywood at his best, and that is the best of English dramatic composition. The Fair Maid's lover takes his leave of her with the remark, —

> " Time calls hence;
> We now must part.
> *Bess.* Oh that I had the power to make Time lame,
> To stay the stars, or make the moon stand still,
> That future day might never haste thy flight ! "

Again, where Bess addresses the picture of her absent lover, —

> " Thou resemblest him
> For whose sweet safety I was every morning
> Down on my knees, and with the larks' sweet tunes

I did begin my prayers; and when sad sleep
Had charmed all eyes, and when none save the bright stars
Were up and waking, I remembered thee;
But all, all to no purpose."

Here is Art most successfully concealing Art by holding close to Nature. Had this passage occurred in Shakspeare, how many times we should have suffered the impertinence of having pointed out to us the unconscious change from the third person at the end of the first line to the second person at the end of the sixth. It is a happy circumstance that there are many fair creations in English literature not yet paralyzed by the touch of the critical commentator.

Heywood's command of language shows strong in a passage from "The Fair Maid of the Exchange," where Cripple teaches Berry how to beg.

"And you want words, sirrah, I 'll teach thee words.
Thou shouldst have come to every one of us
As thus: 'Thou wretch, thou miser, thou vile slave
And drudge to money, bondman to thy wealth,
Apprenticed to a penny; thou that hoardest up
The fry of silver pence and halfpennies,
With show of charity to give the poor,
But put'st them to increase where in short time
They grow a child's part, or a daughter's portion;
Thou that invent'st new clauses for a bond
To cozen simple plainness, — oh, not a dragon,
Now, nor the devil's fangs, are half so cruel
As are thy claws.' Thus, thus thou shouldst have railed."

The play, "If You know not Me, You know Nobody," deals with the career of Elizabeth before she came to the throne, and is perhaps of greatest interest from a political point of view. As showing the popular feeling, which was suppressed by the harsh measures of Mary while she kept her sister in prison, two soldiers employed to guard the princess are represented

as exchanging views upon the justice of their sovereign. The one has been cautioned that his language may be reported to the government, and occasion him trouble. He guards himself in this manner: —

"Well, sirs, I have two sisters; and the one loves the other, and would not send her to prison for a million. Is there any harm in this? I 'll keep myself within compass, I warrant you; for I do not talk of the queen. I talk of my sisters."

The two plays relating to King Edward IV. show several types of English character in a strong and clear light. Hobs, the tanner of Tamworth, is original and entertaining. Hobs belongs to the well-to-do class of the common people of his day. He is loyal to his king, and is ready to support him with his means. The mixture of ignorance and shrewdness in his talk gives it a peculiar flavor. When Sir Humphrey visits Tamworth to solicit some contributions to the funds of the government, he broaches the subject with becoming consideration for the feelings of those who are doomed to be bled; but the bluff tanner goes right to the spot. "So the 'feck and meaning whereby, as it were, of all your long purgation, Sir Humphrey, is no more, in some respect, but the king wants money, and would have some of his commonty."

There is an abundance of dialect in these plays, as one might suspect from Hobs's speech. There are also literary clews which are worth notice. One of those early political squibs which were current during the contest between the Houses of York and Lancaster is met with in this play of "Edward IV." It seems to refer to Richard II. and some of his supporters. It proves that the sentiment, "to the victor belongs the spoils," is not of recent origin, nor is it peculiar to our

politicians. The old rhymes — old in the time of Edward IV. — are repeated by Shore, or Flood, as he is called, at the request of Gloster: —

"*Glos.* What libeller? Another Collingborne,
That wrote 'The Cat, the Rat, and Lovell our Dog,
Do rule all England under a Hog,' —
Canst thou repeat it, Flood?
Shore. I think I can, if you command me so.
Glos. We do command thee.
Shore. In this sort it goes:
'The crook-backed Boar the way hath found
To root our roses from the ground;
Both flower and bud will be confound,
Till King of Beasts the Swine be crowned;
And then the Dog, the Cat, and Rat
Shall in his trough feed and be fat.'"

In common with all the dramatists of that age, and quite naturally under the circumstances, Heywood has his quiet little joke at the expense of the Puritans. In his most popular play, "A Woman killed with Kindness," the Puritanic cant of the day is hit off, —

"*Mrs. A.* Oh, what a clog unto the soul is sin!
We pale offenders are still full of fear;
Every suspicious eye brings danger near
When they, whose clear hearts from offence are free,
Despite report, base scandals do outface,
And stand at mere defiance with disgrace.
Wendoll. Fie, fie! you talk, too, like a Puritan."

With a better grace and with better reason does Heywood ridicule the literary cribbers of the time. In "Love's Mistress" we have this bit of dialogue:

"*Midas.* But where's your poet ass among all these?
Apuleius. There's no such creature.
Midas. Then what callest thou those
That let not men lie quiet in their graves,

But haunt their ghosts with ballads and bald rhymes?
Do they not teach the very fiends in hell
Speak in blank verse? Do we not daily see
Every dull-witted ass spit poetry?"

Elsewhere, in "How to become a Wit," Heywood describes more particularly the methods of these literary parasites. He had evidently studied the tactics of those publishers who put forth unauthorized editions of his own plays. Cripple's speech is a disclosure:

"*Cripple.* I could do more; for I could make inquiry
Where the best-witted gallants use to dine,
Follow them to the tavern, and there sit
In the next room with a calveshead and brimstone,
And overhear their talk, observe their humors,
Collect their jests, put them into a play,
And tire them, too, with payment, to behold
What I have filched from them. This I could do;
But oh, for shame that men should so arraign
Their own fee-simple wits for verbal theft!"

Heywood possessed the gifts of a true lyric poet. His songs have the elements of a lasting popularity. Some of them are rarely equalled for truthfulness of feeling and melody of expression. As examples of this poet's grace and elegance of composition are to be met with in every collection of the gems of English song, they are with the less reluctance omitted here. Only two lines are quoted from one of them to show the source from which their inspiration came: —

"Our music from the birds we borrow,
They bidding us, we them, good-morrow."

XXVI.

JOHN TAYLOR.

1580–1654.

THE public has always been peculiarly indulgent towards ready rhymesters, without seeming to care much whether sense or nonsense went along with the jingle. It may be that this feeling is a survival of that awe with which the ancient *vates* was regarded. At any rate, the itinerant vendor of original doggerel verse has found a market for his wares here in New England from early colonial times. Murders, executions, accidental drownings, and other such painful occurrences have been the occasions that have inspired a great amount of local talent. The manufacture and the patronage were both brought from England, and John Taylor, the water-poet, as he was called, may be taken as the prototype of the doggerel verse-writers of this country.

Taylor belonged to a period when his example would be most felt for good or ill in modifying taste in the colonies. He was born in 1580, and in 1630 his published pieces, to the number of sixty-three, were collected into a folio volume of nearly a thousand pages. He continued publishing until 1653, the year before his death, and of these later pieces the Spenser Society has succeeded in preserving seventy-one, in five quarto volumes. It is likely that many of these old brochures

were lost, for as early as 1640 Taylor declares, in his "Differing Worships," —

> "I (with applause) have writ near sevenscore books."

As his pen continued no less prolific for the next twelve years, it is fair to conclude that several of these productions have escaped the search of the Spenser Society.

Of the poet himself we can learn from his verses all that a craving curiosity could care to know. Little indirect light is thrown upon his life by contemporary writers. A personal notice of some interest is met with in the lines of Henry Ellis, addressed to his friend Mr. Taylor, on his voyage and journey, 1641, —

> "From ancient Monmouth Geoffrey took his name, —
> So Henry did from Huntington likewise;
> Why may not Gloucester add to Taylor's fame,
> Since that from thence his birth and name did rise?"

This fixes the county to which the poet's family belonged. For himself he assumed the title of "water-poet," or *poeta aquaticus*, as he was fond of writing it, from the circumstance of his having been a waterman in his younger days. He often refers to this calling of his with pride, as when he was accused of flattering the rich for a largess, —

> "Let trencher-poets scrape for such base vails, —
> I 'll take an oar in hand when writing fails;
> And 'twixt the boat and pen, I make no doubt
> But I shall shift to pick a living out,
> Without base flattery or base-coined words
> To mouldy madams or unworthy lords."

His early employment is often alluded to by his fellow poets. Dekker wrote of him, —

> "Some say there is a ferryman of hell, —
> The ferryman of heaven I now know well."

It is to this course of the poet's unschooled early life that must be ascribed all the exuberance of his muse. His reading and his writing were restricted to the vernacular; but within these limits he moved with freedom. In answer to the charge that poets of his time pilfered from the ancients, he says, —

> "For mine own part, my conscience witness is
> I ne'er was guilty of such theft as this;
> Unto such robbery I could never reach,
> Because I understand no foreign speech.
> To prove that I am from such filching free,
> Latin and French are heathen Greek to me.
> The Grecian and the Hebrew characters
> I know as well as I can reach the stars.
> The sweet Italian and the chip-chop Dutch
> I know the man i' th' moon can speak as much."

Curiously enough, right alongside this disclaimer of any and all knowledge of the ancient languages, Taylor abounds in classical allusions to a remarkable degree. They are both particular and general, and, what is most to be wondered at, they are usually correct. The poet must have borrowed all this material from English sources. The fact is worthy of notice, because it has been made a matter of great difficulty by many to account for Shakspeare's acquaintance with the classics. It is plain to the reader of this poet that, through translations, the classics were more in the hands of the general reader in those days than they are in these modern times. As before said, Taylor is usually correct in his allusions; but there are plenty of exceptions to prove the rule. For instance, in these lines, —

> "And noble Nestor, at the siege of Troy,
> Had lived three hundred years, both man and boy," —

he mistakes generations for centuries, and even at that enlarges a little upon Homer's statement.

Taylor never halted for difficulties, but he went over the hard places roughshod. No writer ever showed more unlimited confidence in the good-nature of his readers. In recounting some personal experience of his, he says, —

> " That villain had a mighty mind to baste me;
> But I from him did to the castle haste me,
> Where Peterborough's earl and the Lord Rochfort
> (Pardon my rhyme, good reader, I must botch for 't)
> They knew me, and did entertain me friendly,
> And asked at what place did my journey's end lie."

It will be seen that Taylor had a fancy for double rhymes, and he indulged that fancy without limit. Sometimes the rhyme will be kept along for a dozen repetitions. An example of the practice is taken from " Lines to the Honor of O'Toole," —

> " For if thou list in fight to lead a band on,
> Thy slaughtering sword if thou but layst thy hand on,
> Thy fearful foes would straight the place abandon,
> Without or hose or shoes, shirt, or a band on;
> Thou let'st them have no quiet place to stand on."

This exuberance of rhyme appears even in the author's titles. Along with it went a readiness in punning. One of his pieces, published in 1644, is entitled: " Mad Verse, Sad Verse, Glad Verse, and Bad Verse, cut out and stitched together by John Taylor, who bids the reader either to like or dislike them, to commend them or come mend them." Another title to one of his itineraries is " A Very Merry, Wherry-Ferry Voyage." But with all this facility in rhyming, he interchanges verse with prose in the same piece with as little injury to either as was ever accomplished. In his " Penniless Pilgrimage," for example, he suddenly halts with this explanation, —

"But now my versing Muse craves some repose,
And while she sleeps I 'll spout a little prose."

After prosing for a time, he resumes the old measure as a matter of course, —

"And now with sleep my Muse hath eased her brain,
I 'll turn my style from prose to verse again."

That he had some sense of the fitness of things appears in his account of the journey he made from London to Salisbury. In this case it is not to rest his muse, but —

"Some serious matter now I must compile;
And thus from verse to prose I change my style."

In writing "The Praise, Antiquity, and Commodity of Beggary," and "Beggars and Begging," Taylor throws a little light upon the authorship of a well-known song which has come down to us from the Elizabethan era without having any name appended. The circumstances under which the song was written seem to have been known to him, and from his singling this out as an illustration, we may conclude that it was a favorite then as well as now. The "Praise," etc., runs in this wise: —

"And though a poet have th' accomplished parts
Of learning, and the axioms of all arts;
What though he study all his brains to dust
To make his fame immortal and from rust,
Revolving day by day and night by night,
And waste himself by giving others light, —
Yet this is all the guerdon he shall have,
That beggary will attend him to his grave.
He, in his own conceit, may have this bliss,
And sing, '*My mind to me a kingdom is.*'"

Elsewhere the poet gives his view of the condition of his art in those times. The prospect he presents as

possible under certain contingencies does not very strongly second his suggestion.

> "Let Liberality awake, and then
> Each poet in his hand will take a pen,
> And with rare lines enrich a world of paper
> Shall make Apollo and the Muses caper."

What idea the poet had of enriching paper is not easy to discover from his works; but we must at any rate give him credit for being able consciously to write doggerel. In opening his story of "A Dog of War," he says, —

> "In doggerel rhymes my lines are writ,
> As for a dog I thought it fit."

In the course of this performance he introduces a stanza that has not the slightest relation to the context. The absurdity of the thing recalls the capering of the Muses.

> "Great Alexander had a horse,
> A famous beast of mighty force,
> Ycleped Bucephalus.
> He was a stout and sturdy steed,
> And of an excellent race and breed;
> But that concerns not us."

Any notice of Taylor that did not take in his relations with the great political and ecclesiastical parties which made a battle-ground of England, from 1640 to the end of his life, would be fatally incomplete. His position was always plainly defined and strongly defended. He was a Cavalier against the Roundheads; he was a Churchman against schismatics. He characterizes his enemies in language luminous with a tinted light. He groups them in "the two hellish factions, — the Papists and the Brownists." It is the latter of these who most interest us here. Anything that makes

intelligible the exodus from England which promoted the settlement of New England has interest for us. In the earlier stages of that movement it was evidently looked upon as a desertion of native soil for a foreign one. Removal to Holland was stigmatized as disloyalty. The subsequent removal to these shores sufficiently disproved the charge of a want of patriotism. In "The Water Cormorant's Complaint against a Brood of Sand Cormorants," published previously to 1630, Taylor pays his respects to these renegades.

> "And what ungodly place can harbor then
> These fugitive unnatural Englishmen,
> Except that with the Turk or infidel,
> Or on or in the sea they mean to dwell;
> That if in lesser room they may be crammed,
> And live and die at Amster and be damned."

The same spirit is shown in "The Praise of Hempseed," published at about the same time.

> "And for his kneeling at the sacrament,
> In sooth he 'll rather suffer banishment,
> And go to Amster damned, and live and die,
> Ere he 'll commit so much idolatry."

Whoever has observed how much light Macaulay has thrown upon a later period of English history from the cheapest current literature of the time, will see at once the value of such abusive partisan writings as the water-poet was busy in sending out just before the days of the Commonwealth.

XXVII.

PHILIP MASSINGER.

1584–1640.

IT is not encouraging, to say the least, when search for the personal history of a man is rewarded with the discovery of a brief, business-like entry in the mortuary records of an obscure country parish. It tells no more than what can be said of all who have died, — of the quiet villager and of the man of the world alike. The record may be an affecting one, but, after all, when we associate it with the story of a long and busy life, it strikes us very much as does the closing of the book after its story has been read. Nothing could be said of a man which would give us less of a clew to his life and character. And yet we must content ourselves chiefly with this slight memorial mention in regard to the personal history of one of Shakspeare's worthiest successors.

The register of St. Saviour's parish shows the following entry: "March 20, 1639–40, buried Philip Massinger, a stranger." It may be that the word "stranger" was used so late as this, as it had been used in the time of Edward I., to designate technically a non-resident of the parish. However that may have been, it is pretty evident that the parish clerk had no dream that a more curious generation would ever, in turning those pages and reading his entries, stop at the name of Massinger.

We shall find, in the circumstances of the times under Charles I., good grounds for the ready willingness of the parish to ignore the poet as a stranger. No stone was set up to mark his grave, and we may almost say that for two hundred years his fame slept with him. From the obscurity of his life and fortune the world has feelingly, and most likely with justice, applied to him the line, —

"Poorly, poor man, he lived, — poorly, poor man, he died."

He was not fortunate in the choice of his profession; or, what is more likely, following the bent of his genius, he had the ill luck to fall on evil times. The period of his life, from 1584 to 1639, coincided with the rapid decadence of interest in histrionic art and in dramatic composition. His earlier memories were brightened with the gayeties of the court of Elizabeth, and his later prospects were darkened by the solemnities of the Puritan Parliament. For twenty-five years after the poet's death, all work such as his was as completely tabooed from library, from school, and from social assemblies as if it had been subject to the disabilities of a legislative as well as of an ecclesiastical interdict. In the light of later developments, we can easily imagine that parish clerk, on the 20th of March, 1639, writing after the name of Massinger the word "stranger" with a feeling of pharisaic satisfaction. It may here be noted that everything which patient and diligent search could glean relating to the personal history of the poet will be found in the introduction to his plays by Hartley Coleridge.

We shall be all the more content with the little we can learn of the man when we reflect how little is positively known of the life of Shakspeare. Some pretty

obvious considerations will tend to moderate our curiosity in regard to the life and character of any dramatic writer. No species of writing is more closely related to the arts of representation than this. Now, it is well understood that every work of art is to be judged independent of the character and reputation of the artist. If the work is really bad, not all the virtues of a saint on the part of author or artist can save it from being damned. On the other hand, if the work is good, its excellences are undimmed by any vice of the workman. Again, it was a rule observed by the Greek dramatists, and observed, too, by all who have followed them with any degree of success, that the writer's personality should appear as little as possible in his work. As a consequence, dramatic writing reveals nothing more clearly of its author than a genius for keeping himself out of sight.

There is, however, one quality which marks all true poetry and art, and which connects it with its author. It makes us forget to study and to criticise, as we always forget to do in the presence of the highest art. This quality is that impressiveness by which the idea of the picture, the poem, or the statue which we are contemplating is borne in upon our soul. How much stronger and fresher was that original inspiration which had previously moved the mind of the author! It is when we realize this that we begin to feel that exaltation to which some mind must have been raised before it conceived the beauty and the glory of that which is before us. This is genius. Incapable of being sullied by the life and character of its possessor, it has that power of awakening sentiment which makes all artistic and literary expression the bond it is between the present and the past.

The want of pure genius in the writings of Massinger need not surprise us; it is rare enough in every literature. But an author may deserve to be read because of his relation to time and place in history. This is what gives the plays before us their interest. They are the latest products of what may be called the Shakspearian era. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the stage was a recognized power in England. Under the pressure of public opinion its influence must go with the one party or the other if it would not be ground to powder between them as the upper and the nether millstone. The Church was with good reason unfriendly. Government and society would patronize the drama if they could make it useful to their purposes. In the general going down of institutions, the stage must prove its fitness to survive if it would escape the fate of others. Puritan reform had methods and machinery of its own, quite independent of the stage, and Puritan reform prevailed. What dramatists could do at such a time as this can best be seen in the works of Massinger.

The poet evidently tried the middle course as the safest. This made him conservative; and he held to the traditional faults as well as to the excellences of his art. It is for this reason, we must conclude, that his pages are here and there smirched to the very last with language that is the shame of dramatic literature. For we do not have to read far to discover that he was of gentle birth, of good parts and education, with the instincts of a literary man and of a gentleman. The eighteen plays of his that remain to us, though less than half he wrote, are evidence enough that during the working years of his life he must have applied himself assiduously to letters. From the fact that he has

left little of prose or verse besides his plays, we can confidently class Massinger with the professional playwrights.

How the author looked upon his profession may be seen, it is fair to presume, from one of his plays, "The Roman Actor." In the opening scene of the first act of this, the players are introduced complaining of the want of patronage in their day. After speaking of other entertainments upon which the public spend their time and money, the actors continue the colloquy as follows: —

"*Paris.* Yet grudge us,
That with delight join profit and endeavor
To build their minds up fair, and on the stage
Decipher to the life what honors wait
On good and glorious actions, and the shame
That treads upon the heels of vice, the salary
Of six sestertii.
Æsopus. For the profit, Paris,
And mercenary gain, they are things beneath us;
Since while you hold your grace and power with Cæsar,
We from your bounty find a large supply,
Nor can one thought of want ever approach us.
Paris. Our aim is glory, and to leave our names
To aftertime.
Latinus. And, would they give us leave,
There ends all our ambition."

If we assume that the writer here identifies himself with the actor, — and such is the traditional usage of his guild, — it will be seen that he proposes, as his aim and purpose, to show virtue rewarded and vice punished; and he proposes to do this, as the novelists have so often done it, "to the life." The mistake of both novelist and dramatist has been their realism. Nature and grace both idealize. No human genius has ever yet wrought with motives and actions as Providence

has done. When moralists attempt to train us in the conduct of life by warning example, they are in great danger of running into excess. They present at one view the full scope of human possibilities. Actual life is held within bounds which it rarely touches. This moral training reminds one of the Spartan method of teaching temperance by the exhibition of drunken Helots. Often it assumes the grim grotesqueness of the slave's reminder to his royal master at the banquet table and in the midst of the revels: "O king, you are going to die!"

The reader will not have failed to notice, in the passage quoted, the dignity and propriety of the language used and the smoothness of the rhythm. That Massinger was not unaware what was due to his calling, is plain enough in this passage from "The Bondman:"

"*Græculo.* You may see
We are prepared for hanging, and confess
We have deserved it; our most humble suit is
We may not twice be executed.
Timoleon. Twice!
How meanest thou?
Græculo. At the gallows first, and after in ballad
Sung to some villainous tune. There are ten-groat rhymers
About the town, grown fat on these occasions.
Let but a chapel fall or street be fired,
A foolish lover hang himself for pure love,
Or any such like accident, and before
They are cold in their graves, some damn'd ditty 's made
Which makes their ghosts walk."

The reader of these plays will observe here and there a borrowing of partial personality which barely outlines some phantom of thought. In "The Renegado," Manto says, —

"My much haste now commands me hence."

In another place Bellisant directs, —

> "Convey him in;
> But do it with a face of fear."

This pertains wholly to the finish of the work. The poet's strength and originality is to be found in the construction of his plots and in the drawing of his characters. In the former he was hampered by the circumstances of the times. Of the thirty-seven plays the titles of which are preserved, there are but two known to have had their scene laid in England. The subjects chosen were equally remote from the interests of the day. This has had much to do with shelving the author above the reach of ordinary readers, but it has made his work all the more valuable for literary study.

XXVIII.

ROBERT HERRICK.

1591 ?–1674.

THE literary work of Herrick belongs to the first half of the seventeenth century. The collection of his poems which he called "Hesperides" — a fruitage of sunset gardens — was published first in 1648. He was then nearly sixty years of age, since 1591 is commonly given as the year of his birth. Evidently the poet had for a long time meditated publication; for we find scattered through the collection no less than seven rhymed addresses to his book, to say nothing of allusions to it in phrases such as "pains without profit." To the same purport is the speeding he gives the volume in this line, —

"Go thou forth, my book, though late."

That the publication was intended to embrace all his poetical effusions appears from this: —

"Only a little more
I have to write;
Then I'll give o'er,
And bid the world good-night."

With what kindliness of feeling this last good-night was spoken, the worthy curate gives us assurance —

"That each lyric here shall be
Of my love a legacy
Left to all posterity."

The boyhood of Herrick was passed under the reign of Elizabeth, and he carried through his life the literary traditions of that era. But the youth of the poet opened upon a period impatient of art, and his life of study and of work was spent in an age intolerant of all trifling, and devoted to what was serious in purpose and heroic in attempt. An age that could afford inspiration to a Milton had little of encouragement for such a man as Herrick. And yet through this period of loud contention and sturdy resistance the poet goes singing in perfect unconsciousness or with utter abandon. To come upon his lyric songs in the literature of that time is like a rare suggestion of summer on a stormy day in March. The trees around us are bare, the grass and the stubble are equally harsh and dry, the ground is yet frozen, and the brooks are warm in their beds, only under heavy blankets of ice, snow drifts through the air and over the fields, making gloom above and about us, when all at once there comes down with the flakes of snow a stream of golden sunlight. We look up through the glittering flakes, through a rift in the breaking clouds, and we catch a glimpse of the blue sky beyond, as calm and mild as that which smiles on all the land and sea in the pleasant days of June. At the same time from the woodside comes a low, sweet note of music such as we remember to have heard in the prelude to a summer's symphony. We look, and there flashes out from among the twigs of the thicket and the dead leaves clinging to them a gleam of blue as bright as that of summer heavens, as if a fleck of the sky above had got astray, and, joining the mad whirl of the flakes of snow, had come to the earth with them. We have to rouse our memory to recall that this is the blue of a bluebird's back.

In his long literary career Herrick carried his heartiness and truthfulness of feeling far into an age which was crystallizing the sentiments of humanity into unchanging form for future poetic use. Perhaps his out-of-the-way life as a country parson had much to do with preserving his naturalness of feeling. Had he lived more in the company of writers of his time he might have followed less sure guidance than his own poetic instinct. We feel the more that there was this risk when he tells us at the shrine of what divinity he worships.

"Candles I 'll give to thee,
And a new altar,
And thou, Saint Ben, shalt be
Writ in my psalter."

The saint to be added to the poet's calendar was no other than Ben Jonson. At such a shrine as he proposed to raise, it is to be feared that Herrick would have made quite different offerings from the kids and lambs of his pastoral verse. As it was, in the quiet of his Devon living his simple Muse drew inspiration from the familiar scenes and simple life about him. He tells us in the argument to his book what themes employed his pen: —

"I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds and bowers,
Of April, May, of June and July flowers;
I sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes.
I write of youth, of love, and have access
By these to sing of cleanly wantonness;
I sing of dews, of rains, and, piece by piece,
Of balm, of oil, of spice, and ambergris;
I sing of times trans-shifting; and I write
How roses first came red, and lilies white;
I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing
The court of Mab and of the fairy king.
I write of Hell; I sing, and ever shall,
Of Heaven, and hope to have it after all."

It will be seen that these themes include what is fair and sweet in Nature, what is romantic and tender in life. Herrick was for his day a sort of interpreter of Nature; it was given him to find —

> "A present god-like power
> Imprinted in each herb and flower;"

and this was a gift withheld from his fellow poets for many generations after. What is peculiar to his sympathy for the objects about him is that he does not call for them to minister to any want of his, but he gives himself wholly to their unspoken tenderness of being. Wordsworth could have shown no more delicacy or fineness of sentiment in coming upon primroses bathed in morning dew, —

> "Why do ye weep, sweet babes?
> Can tears
> Speak grief in you
> Who were but born
> Just as the modest morn
> Teemed her refreshing dew?
> Alas! ye have not known that shower
> That mars a flower,
> Nor felt the unkind
> Breath of a blasting wind;
> Nor are ye worn with years,
> Or warped, as we,
> Who think it strange to see
> Such pretty flowers, like to orphans young,
> To speak by tears before ye have a tongue."

The poet shows in this a vividness of fancy like that of the early Greeks, who peopled woods and waters with dryads and with nymphs. His rare skill appears in his questioning Nature, rather than in assigning motives of his own suggestion. He moralizes very little; his fancy takes no lofty or extended flight. It is the

lark running through the meadow grass, not singing at heaven's gate. Whenever it takes flight, it quickly comes to the ground again; and always it alights on English soil. This contentment with homely scenes and subjects is to be praised all the more in one who saw growing in popularity the school of French classicism.

Herrick's special fondness is for flowers. We have already seen that it was not the case with him, as it was with Peter Bell, that —

> "A primrose by a river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more."

He calls the violets maids-of-honor to the spring; and writing of the heart's-ease, or pansies, he says, —

> "Frolic virgins once these were,
> Over-loving, living here."

But perhaps the most familiar of the poet's lines, and those which show him at his best, are those addressed to the daffodils.

> "Fair daffodils, we weep to see
> You haste away so soon;
> As yet the early rising sun
> Has not attained his noon.
> Stay, stay
> Until the hasting day
> Has run
> But to the evensong;
> And having prayed together, we
> Will go with you along."

One cannot speak of Herrick and omit all mention of the coarseness which mars so much of his verse as to render his complete works wholly unfit for reading at the present day. Happily for the poet's reputation,

and for the pleasure of such readers as enjoy the music of his lyre, Mr. Francis T. Palgrave has prepared an expurgated edition of Herrick which contains nothing to offend. In defence of that coarseness no right-minded and right-principled student of English will say one word; his condemnation of it will be swift and emphatic. But when it comes to the question of throwing away the gold that lies in the mud, that is another matter. The true, the beautiful, and the good are rarely found unmixed with error, deformity, and vice. If we are to deny ourselves all share in these except what comes to us refined from all dross by some process in which we have taken no part, the chances are that our possessions will be but meagre. This reflection is made upon the works of Herrick because within a few years one who is eminent in English letters has declared that we cannot afford to keep any work which bears the taint of impurity. A cooler judgment will agree with the critic in the propriety of purging our literature from all impurity; but it will be no less positive that we cannot afford to throw away any good thing from our treasures of art and of letters.

XXIX.

IZAAK WALTON.

1593–1683.

DEAR old Izaak Walton did love to go a-fishing, and he had the candor and the courage to make open avowal of his passion. In this weakness of his the gentle angler was by no means singular, for there has lived on to the present day of more sensational pleasures a certain fond regard for the amiable art of fishing; and to this diversion many still devote that portion of their lives which Sir Henry Wotton used to call —

"His idle time not idly spent."

This innate pleasure of angling seems to be a survival from an earlier and simpler age, and it loses little of intensity as it reappears in later generations. The disciples of Walton, so far as the intent of their practice is concerned, still go a fishing with all the ardor of their worthy master, and they still follow the sport with a patience not less than that with which he loitered by Shawford Brook, or strolled down quiet Dovedale. But yet there is all the difference in the world in the manner of their going. Clearly, the honest angler never went a-fishing without inviting his soul to go along with him for company. Much of that talk which goes on between himself and his imagined pupil under the

spreading sycamore-tree which shelters them from the rain, or in the cool shade of the hawthorn hedge while the dew is on the grass, and the air is sweet with the fragrance of flowers, and is filled with the singing of birds, holding its course as calmly as a trout-brook runs through the meadow, is easily seen to be the soliloquy of a simple-hearted angler. This is the delightful charm of that book of instruction in his art, "The Compleat Angler; or, The Contemplative Man's Recreation."

The sub-title of this charming book reveals its true character. Angling is indeed the recreation of the contemplative man, and such a person was the author. It is curious to note in literature that the reflective faculties of the mind are exercised earlier than the perceptive. The generation to which Plato belonged was intensely metaphysical. One cannot fail to observe while reading the philosopher how rarely those who are admitted to his dialogue show any interest in the external world. Socrates, walking out of the city, remarks upon the blossoming trees and the springing grass; but it is with a momentary surprise, and he forthwith lapses into his customary discourse upon the nature of man. The next generation produced Aristotle, whose genius for dealing with the problems of Nature and with the practical affairs of life has not been surpassed by the talent of any modern scientist. So, in the development of English literature, the contemplative Walton naturally precedes the more matter-of-fact naturalists of later times.

But so permanent is the influence of "The Compleat Angler," and so gradual has been the transition in literary taste and in scientific interest, that it is not easy to realize the fact that it is now almost three

hundred years since this gently ruminating author was born at Stafford in 1593. The first edition of his book appeared in 1653; and so great was its popularity that five editions of it were called for during the author's life. This is a fact of interest to us as indicating the good taste of that day, and also because the book received careful revision in the several editions, so that portions of it were written over more than once. This proves the great care and labor which Walton gave to all his work. He was the true literary artist, who sought to bring his ideal full into the reader's view. This appears more fully in those lives he wrote of his friends Donne, Hooker, Herbert, Walton, and Sanderson. They were all fellow workers with himself upon literary themes, and he has made these memoirs what he says the virtues of his subjects were, such "that all ought to be preserved as copies for posterity to write after." They are marked by a tenderness of sentiment that reflects the warmth of the writer's heart, and a correctness of judgment that proves the integrity of his mind. These lines, among others adressed to him by his friend Cotton upon the publication of his "Life of Dr. Donne," testify to the author's reputation for honesty: —

> "And if your many merits shall have bred
> An abler pen to write your life when dead,
> I think an honester cannot be read."

Walton disclaims all pretensions to scholarship or to literary skill. His works, however, show familiarity with the best of ancient literature and the unstudied grace of the art of composition. It is pretty clear that this was imbibed from discourse with such masters of verse and prose as were Donne and Herbert and other eminent divines whose friendship it was his good for-

tune to enjoy. Examples of finished composition have been culled from the "Lives" he wrote by those who have wondered where he found the models after which he worked. Here is a striking instance of his employing the chiastic arrangement of terms. It is from the "Life of Dr. Donne." "Thus he began the day and ended the night, — ended the restless night, and began the weary day in lamentations." This has been aptly likened to the beautiful line in which Orpheus is represented mourning for Eurydice, —

"Te veniente die, te decedente canebat,"

Thee with the coming of day, with its going thee he lamented. Here are certainly features in common distinct enough to suggest a pretty close relationship. There is, however, no need to look outside Walton's own work to find examples of admirable skill in the framing of sentences. In this same "Life" he shows how the thought may be continued and gradually developed by the recurrence of words, blending the operations of the mind with the expression of results in the most perfect manner: —

"And now he was so happy as to have nothing to do but to die; to do which, he stood in need of no longer time, for he had studied it long, and to so happy a perfection that, in a former sickness, he called God to witness he was that minute ready to deliver his soul into his hands if that minute God would determine his dissolution."

Walton prized above all else for himself and for his fellow men a cheerful spirit and a happy temper. He spent his long life — longer, no doubt, for the manner in which it was spent — in calm contentment, dying in 1683, at the age of ninety, in his native town of Staf-

ford. His discourse while coming home from his last day's fishing, recommends such a life : —

"Content will never dwell but in a meek and quiet soul. And this may appear if we read and consider what our Saviour says in St. Matthew's Gospel, for he there says: 'Blessed be the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed be the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed be the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven ; and, Blessed be the meek, for they shall possess the earth.' Not that the meek shall not also obtain mercy and see God and be comforted, and at last come to the kingdom of heaven ; but in the mean time he, and he only, possesses the earth, as he goes towards that kingdom of heaven, by being humble and cheerful, and content with what his good God has allotted him. . . . What would a blind man give to see the pleasant rivers, and meadows and flowers and fountains that we have met with since we met together? I have been told that if a man that was born blind could obtain to have his sight for but only one hour during his whole life, and should at the first opening of his eyes fix his sight upon the sun when it was in its full glory, either at the rising or setting of it, he would be so transported and amazed and so admire the glory of it that he would not willingly turn his eyes from that first ravishing object to behold all the other various beauties this world could present to him. And this and many other like blessings we enjoy daily. And for most of them, because they be so common, most men forget to pay their praises; but let not us, because it is a sacrifice so pleasing to Him that made that sun and us, and still protects us and gives us flowers, and showers, and stomachs, and meat, and content, and leisure to go a-fishing."

This sentiment the author may have heard from Dr. Donne, who was his pastor for many years, or from his poet-friend, Herbert, it chimes in so well with the

spirit of his Muse. But the last cause for thankfulness — leisure to go a-fishing — is no borrowed sentiment; that proceeds from the abundance of the angler's own honest heart.

Walton's observations upon Nature are not critical and scientific, but, in keeping with the spirit of his age, they are kindly and appreciative. His remarks upon the singing of his favorite birds show how he looked upon Nature and listened to her voices. There is room here but for a single paragraph.

"But the nightingale, another of my airy creatures, breathes such sweet, loud music out of her little instrumental throat that it might make mankind to think miracles are not ceased. He that at midnight, when the very laborer sleeps securely, should hear, as I have often, the clear airs, the sweet descants, the natural rising and falling, the doubling and redoubling of her voice, might well be lifted above earth and say, Lord, what music hast thou provided for the saints in heaven, when thou affordest bad men such music on earth?"

A writer of Walton's genius and temperament could scarcely leave the world without contributing to our literature some specimens of verse. There remains, among others of his pieces, the familiar little poem entitled "The Angler's Wish," whose lines breathe the melody of the woods and fields, and the very fragrance of his contemplative life. The piece will be best recalled by its admirers from its closing lines: —

> "There bid good morning to next day;
> There meditate my time away;
> And angle on, and beg to have
> A quiet passage to a welcome grave."

XXX.

JAMES SHIRLEY.

1596-1666.

THE memory of Shirley lives by the grace of a few lines from the lyric portions of his dramas. Few readers know him as being, with only two or three exceptions, the most voluminous writer of plays in our language. The songs and fragments which have kept their popularity and which have brought the name of this writer down to our day, are rarely associated now with the labored tragedies or the dull comedies in which they originally appeared. His collected works are presented in the six-volume edition of Mr. Dyce, — a monument to misapplied talent and patient literary drudgery. Whether we look upon this poet as an exponent of the decadence of the drama in his day, a leader in the ranks of its friends stupidly working its ruin, or whether we charge his failure to the disabilities under which playwrights had fallen, either view will affect our opinion of the man rather than of his poetry. It was certainly the misfortune of Shirley that the traditions and the vogue of his time led him to adopt the form of the drama. This is to be regretted on our account because we feel that he could have done better work in another line; it is to be regretted for the poet, because he was clearly forced into the service of the stage that was already disgraced. In the pro-

logue to his first drama, "Love Tricks," licensed Feb. 10, 1624–25, Shirley says, —

> "This play is
> The first-fruits of a Muse that before this
> Never saluted audience, nor doth mean
> To swear himself a factor for the scene."

Despite this good resolution, Shirley devoted a long and busy literary life to the drama. It is pretty clear that the poet, well aware of his limitations, was carried away by the current of opinion in literary circles. This is not greatly to be wondered at. He was born in London in 1596, at the time when Shakspeare and his fellows were at the height of their success. He stood a chance of having personal recollections of the greatest of the Elizabethan poets. This influence was recognized by Garrick in a prologue to "The Gamester" of Shirley, which Garrick played in 1758, —

> "No paltry thefts disgraced this author's pen;
> He painted English manners, English men,
> And formed his taste on Shakspeare and old Ben."

However justly or unjustly Shirley may be charged with — or credited with, if that view is preferred — the imitating of Shakspeare and Jonson, it is not to be expected that so industrious and prolific a writer should not adopt certain mannerisms. Perhaps a fondness for copying his excellences, as well as for repeating his faults, may have been in Dryden's mind when he directed this sneer at Shadwell in 1682, —

> "Heywood and Shirley were but types of thee,
> Thou last great poet of tautology."

To find these mannerisms, if Shirley had them, we shall need to compare passages evidently elaborated

with unusual care. The description given, in "The Brothers," of Jacinta at her devotions will serve as one such: —

"Her eye did seem to labor with a tear,
Which suddenly took birth, but overweighed
With its own swelling, dropped upon her bosom,
Which, by reflection of her light, appeared
As Nature meant her sorrow for an ornament;
After, her looks grew cheerful, and I saw
A smile shoot graceful upward from her eyes,
As if they had gained a victory o'er grief;
And with it many beams twisted themselves,
Upon whose golden threads the angels walk
To and again from heaven."

The conception here was dainty enough to suit a first-rate artist, but the picture shows too much of finish; the details are worked out too carefully for effective painting. Evidently Shirley liked this kind of work, for in a later play, "Love in a Maze," he makes Gerard say to Thornay, —

"Hast thou not seen the woodbine,
That honey-dropping tree, and the loved brier
Embrace with their chaste boughs, twisting themselves,
And weaving a green net to catch the birds,
Till it do seem one body, while the flowers
Wantonly run to meet and kiss each other?

That Shirley was not unaware how dangerously near this extravagance of language and excess of sentiment came to genuine fustian, seems plain from what he has one of the characters in the play last quoted say. Caperwit is a poetaster, and he offends too nearly after the poet's own method, —

"But, lady, be assured my heart is dedicated
To you, and were all womankind in balance
With your divinest person, their light scale

Would kick the firmament, or, coming down,
Be lost in the middle region of the air,
Or be converted to a cloud to weep
Upon the earth for being so much excelled."

Had this been written by some other hand, it might have been thought a travesty of Shirley's inflated style. There is a passage in "The Cardinal," a bit of dialogue between Columbo and Antonio, wherein the poet admirably criticises his own faults, —

"*Colu.* Ha! had she
No symptom in her eye or face of anger?
Ant. Serene as I
Have seen the morning rise upon the spring;
No trouble in her breath, but such a wind
As came to kiss and fan the smiling flowers.
Colu. No poetry?
Ant. By all the truth in prose,
By honesty, and your own honor, sir,
I never saw her look more calm and gentle."

The occasion for the admonition and the naturalness with which Antonio continues his description after it, mark very strongly the poet's idea of what is overwrought. It might have saved him labor and have done his reputation no harm had he listened to the warning, "No poetry!"

This play, "The Cardinal," is of the greater interest to us because Shirley was a Catholic from the time when he began to write; and we naturally look to this play for some reflection of his views. It will be found remarkably free from political or religious bias. The fact that it was licensed in 1641 may account for this. As a specimen of its lofty morality may be taken the interview between the cardinal and the duchess, where the former reports the grounds upon which the king would pardon a murderer.

"*Car.* Nor was it rational —
I speak the king's own language — he should die
For taking one man's breath, without whose valor
None now had been alive without dishonor.
Duch. In my poor understanding, 't is the crown
Of virtue to proceed in its own track,
Not deviate from honor. If you acquit
A man of murder 'cause he has done brave
Things in the war, you will bring down his valor
To a crime."

There is another passage in this same play which will not fail to attract the notice of the reader. It is a bit of fun, — a thing quite rare in Shirley's plays. What makes it all the more remarkable is that the fun is at the expense of the cardinal; and it naturally raises a doubt as to the poet's loyalty to his Church, or a suspicion that it may have been brought in to suit the temper of the times. The joke is introduced by Antonio, —

"I would this soldier had the cardinal
Upon a promontory; with what a spring
The churchman would leap down! It were a spectacle
Most rare to see him topple from the precipice,
And souse in the salt water with a noise
To stun the fishes. And if he fall into
A net, what wonder would the simple seagulls
Have to draw up the o'ergrown lobster,
So ready boiled!"

Shirley appears to have written with a view to the restoration of the stage to popular favor at some day not remote. In this hope he was disappointed; for although he lived to 1666, it was only to find that the public taste was more corrupt than he had known it, and there were baser wits than he ready at its service. The discouragement under which he was working in 1642 is well expressed in his prologue to "The Sisters."

"Think what ye do; you see
What audiences we have, what company
To Shakspeare comes, whose mirth did once beguile
Dull hours, and, buskinned, made even sorrows smile;
So lovely were the wounds that men would say
They could endure the bleeding a whole day.
He has but a few friends lately, — think o' that;
He 'll come no more, and others have his fate."

The failure of Shirley as a dramatist was due first of all to his method. Most of his plays are what he calls tragi-comedies. The very plan of them violates the most essential of the unities. The poet was too well read in the ancient drama not to have known the canon of the Greek tragedians. If he supposed that because Shakspeare could now and then disregard the unity of time and of place, it was therefore safe for him to try to work out a double purpose in one and the same play, it proves either hardihood or folly. It may be that at times there is but a step between the sublime and the ridiculous; but it is certain that if either quality advances over that one step, the other immediately vanishes. Oftener than otherwise the tragi-comedy is tragic only in its author's failure.

It was intimated at the outset that Shirley's talent was rather for writing songs. He is better known now for two simple, truthful lines than for all his dramatic writings. The closing lines of that song which was a favorite with Charles II., —

"Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust,"

are imperishably linked with his name. Adopting the poet's fine sentiment, we will leave the apparently unstudied beauty of his lyric pieces to attest the grace and skill he might have commanded in less ambitious undertakings.

XXXI.

THOMAS BROWNE.

1605–1682.

A MANY-SIDED man stands more than one chance of being interesting. Browne was such a man; and few readers can have any interest in rambling over the fields of our literature without desiring to fall in with the hearty and gossipy old doctor. He has been made familiar enough to most readers in a certain way, for his work is almost always taken to illustrate the prose of his time, — say from 1640 to 1680. So far as the language and the style of the man are concerned, they do exemplify pretty well the best thought and expression of his age. It may be added that they mark with almost equal distinctness the literary faults that were then committed. It is not, however, to be wondered at in the least that one who was educated in the time of James I. should become infected with the pedantry which then prevailed.

But it is the subject-matter of Browne's work which interests us now. His style will be sufficiently shown in whatever paragraphs we may find occasion to quote, for all his work is stamped with the individuality of the man. No writer, moreover, has better justified this quality in his books. "It is not sufficient," he says, "for all to hold the common level. Men's names should not only distinguish them. A man should be

something that all men are not, and individual in something beside his proper name. Thus, while it exceeds not the bound of reason and modesty, we cannot condemn singularity. *Nos numerus sumus* is the motto of the multitude, and for that reason are they fools." His writings have much of the strength and the clearness of Milton's prose; but their clearness will prove obscurity to such readers as are not familiar with the Romanized English of the period.

Browne's earliest work was his "Religio Medici," a Doctor's Religion. The popularity of this book may be judged from the fact that within the next hundred years fourteen editions of it were published in England. Foreign editions were numerous, and the treatise was translated into Latin, Dutch, German, French, and, it is said, into Italian. Not less plainly is this popularity shown in the many imitations of the work which appeared during the same time. Within two years of its first publication in 1642, it was followed by the "Religion of a Layman." Soon after this appeared the "Religion of a Lawyer," and then followed the "Religion of a Peripatetic Philosopher," of a Stoic, of a Clergyman, of a Soldier, of a Bookseller, of a Prince, of a Freethinker, of a Gentleman, and of a Lady. It was not until 1818 that the public was favored with the "Religion of a Christian." The latest of these specialized religions that I have noticed is the "Religion of a Chemist," published, I believe, in 1862.

In his "Religio Medici," the author discloses, with the most perfect candor and unreserve, the spirit in which he discusses matters of faith. He says: "I condemn not all things in the Council of Trent, nor approve all in the Synod of Dort. In brief, where the Scripture is silent, the Church is my text; where that

speaks, 't is but my comment; where there is a joint silence of both, I borrow not the rules of my religion from Rome or Geneva, but from the dictates of my own reason."

Browne was a naturalist, according to the bent of his genius and his professional life as a practising physician. He belongs to that thoughtful, almost meditative, group of writers among whom Bacon, Hobbes and Berkeley are his fellows. The author of "Religio Medici" would be thought meditative in our day, but he is to be judged by a different standard of seriousness. As an example of what was then thought noteworthy in that particular respect may be taken the account which is given by Bishop Challoner of a clergyman who was executed at Dorchester in 1594. "His mortification and recollection of God were so great that for three whole years, while his lodging was in a room, the window of which looked upon the parish church, he had never observed it."

Although the good doctor was a scientist, he lacked the qualities of a naturalist. He discoursed of Nature in a most intelligent way, but without the slightest appreciation of her social worth, or the faintest sympathy with her in her various endeavors. And yet few have been able to form, or to express, a clearer notion of what Nature really is. "I call the effects of Nature the works of God, whose hand and instrument she only is; and therefore, to ascribe his actions unto her is to devolve the honor of the principal agent upon the instrument, — which, if with reason we may do, then let our hammers rise up and boast they have built our houses, and our pens receive the honor of our writings."

This view of Nature may be taken as fully adequate

to all theological uses. It can also be recommended to the consideration of scientists as an excellent safeguard against wild vagaries in regard to the methods of creation, for it keeps distinctly before one the fact that the variation of species is going on under the same oversight as the original creation was made, and is embraced in the same general plan. The view has, however, too often led those who held it to contemplate Nature as something wholly external to themselves. They have failed to realize that along with their own life flowed in one current the sum of all life as a single pulsation from the throbbing heart of Nature. Coleridge has come nearer the sentiment of the naturalist in his story of the "Ancient Mariner;" and the last words of this old worthy, whose soul had been

"Alone on a wide, wide sea,"

express that combined tenderness and reverence which mark the literature of Nature since Wordsworth's and Coleridge's day: —

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small,
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

In everything except matters of faith, Browne followed strictly the Baconian method of investigation. By weighing and by measuring, he brought all points of doubt or dispute to the cognizance of the senses. This practice became second nature with him, and we often find him going to the trouble to secure the ocular demonstration of a fact which common reason would have taught him as well. The chief work of his life was "An Inquiry into Vulgar and Common Errors." It is evident that the "Inquiry" was quite to the

writer's taste. Scarcely anything can be imagined more discursive than this was made. It embraces subjects belonging to every department of natural science.

The "errors" here confuted were drawn from the writings of earlier philosophers, chiefly from the Greeks and the Romans. The work is a storehouse of learned ignorance which the world ought to have outgrown before Browne's day. It is not easy to say what percentage of this lives on to our day, and still more difficult is it to decide how far the survival is due to his reputation. The poetic vision of Truth, crushed to earth, rising again, while wounded Error dies amid her worshippers, has not been realized to the full in the history of natural science. The mere mention of some belief which the world has outlived, simply to affix the stamp of disproof, will often give the old error a new lease of existence. In this way, no doubt, Browne's book, appearing at the time it did, and having the popularity it enjoyed, has been the ultimate source to which could be traced many of the popular errors of New England in colonial times.

As an example of how futile, or even injurious, may be any attempt to disprove antiquated absurdities, I recall a bit of nonsense made use of by way of comparison in the "Letters of Major Jack Downing," by Seba Smith. The major wished to illustrate certain political movements made in Jackson's second Administration. He did this by saying that when his mother desired to have boneset act as an emetic, she stripped the leaves upward from the stalk; and when it was to serve as a purge, its leaves were stripped downwards. Now, it is not necessary to suppose that Seba Smith drew this ridiculous notion directly from Browne, but it is pretty

certain that it came indirectly from that source; for Browne gives it as one of those beliefs, "wherein at least we cannot but suspend; . . . that the leaves of *cataputia*, or spurge, being plucked upward or downward, respectively, perform their operations by purge or vomit, as some have written, and old wives still do preach, is a strange conceit, ascribing unto plants positional operations, and after the manner of the loadstone." It is a little strange that Browne himself did not reflect upon the perpetuation of error when he wrote: "The vicious examples of ages past poison the curiosity of these present, affording a hint of sin unto seducible spirits, and soliciting those unto the imitation of them, whose heads were never so perversely principled as to invent them."

If Browne had lived in this age, he would have been ready to practise vivisection whenever occasion might require. He is ready to test with measuring-rule and balance every question that arises, and has the candor to report results whether they confirm his suspicions or prove them unfounded. Here is a paragraph that is characteristic of his method and his style: —

"The assertion that man proportionally hath the largest brain, I did, I confess, somewhat doubt, and conceived it might have failed in birds, especially such as, having little bodies, have yet large cranies, and seem to contain much brain, as snipes, woodcocks, etc. But upon trial I find it very true. The brains of a man, Archangelus and Bauhinus observe to weigh four pounds, and sometimes five and a half. If, therefore, a man weigh a hundred and forty pounds, and his brain but five, his weight is twenty-seven times as much as his brain, deducting the weight of that five pounds which is allowed for it. Now, in a snipe which weighed four ounces, two drachms, I find the brains to weigh but half a drachm;

so that the weight of the body, allowing for the brain, exceeded the weight of the brain sixty-seven times and a half."

All Browne's work was as remote as possible from the affairs of his own time. He says nothing of the quarrel between the king and Parliament, which was being fought out most bitterly while he was carrying on his experimental philosophy. His silence on all these points, however, will recall to the reader's mind what Tacitus says of Agricola, — that he would have lost his recollection as well as his voice, if it had been as easy for him to forget as it was to hold his tongue. Perhaps it is sometimes the case that circumstances which are unfavorable to political activity prove conducive to literary production in the line of such recondite studies; at any rate, it is not infrequently the case that the silence of a writer in regard to his own times is the most eloquent testimony that he can offer.

XXXII.

THOMAS RANDOLPH.

1605-1635.

THE career of Randolph was a short one, but it was correspondingly brilliant. He died in 1634, in the thirtieth year of his age. These data class him as a fellow of that company of wits which was so royally presided over by Ben Jonson. It is curious to note the intimacy which grew up between these two poets. Their names are often associated in the literary history of that time. Jonson patronized many a younger poet, but Randolph was clearly a favorite son. When the poems of the latter were published by his brother, in 1638, the following lines appeared among the dedicatory verses. They were signed "G. W." These initials may have belonged to George Wither. Ben Jonson had died the year before this publication, and it was now four years after the death of Randolph. It is true that the testimony of dedication is to be taken at a discount, and yet this is not without weight. It is well supported: —

> "Immortal Ben is dead; and as that ball
> On Ida tossed, so is his crown by all
> The infantry of wit. Vain priests! that chair
> Is only fit for his true son and heir.

Reach here the laurel. Randolph, 't is thy praise;
Thy naked skull shall well become the bays.
See! Daphne courts thy ghost; and, spite of fate,
Thy poems shall be poet laureate."

Some years later than this (in 1653), we find George Daniel, of Beswick, classing Randolph among others with, —

"The divine Herbert and the Fletchers twain."

Again, in 1662, Rowland Watkins very pertinently asks, —

"What lands had *Randolph*, or great *Ben*,
That ploughed much paper with his pen?"

The literary reputation of Randolph illustrates well the fickleness of popular favor. What was the poet's standing in his own century is easy to be seen. In the following century, which was manifestly inferior in its literary productions, Randolph's name had so completely dropped out of sight, and his works had so dropped out of memory, that collections of the drama and the poetry of his age contained not a line of his writings, or mention of his name. A later and more curious age has done him ample justice.

Randolph devoted himself to dramatic composition. It was natural that the great success of the masters who had just preceded him should powerfully stimulate a fancy for this kind of work. That same success had made it all the more difficult to gain any new laurels in that field. More than that, the legislation of the time was unfriendly to the stage. The theatres were gradually being closed, partly by Act of Parliament, and partly by popular sentiment. Upon the latter point, "The Muses' Looking-Glass" of Randolph affords the clearest evidence. Curiously enough, the neighborhood of Blackfriars was famous for the residence of many Puri-

tans. In this play the poet introduces a Mistress Flowerdew, a seller of pins and looking-glasses, talking with Master Bird, who was also a Puritan, and sold feathers to the players.

"*Mis. Flo.* See, brother, how the wicked throng and crowd
To works of vanity! Not a nook or corner
In all this house of sin, this cave of filthiness,
This den of spiritual thieves, but it is stuffed,
Stuffed, and stuffed full, as is a cushion,
With the lewd reprobate.
Bird. Sister, were there not before inns —
Yes, I will say inns, for my zeal bids me
Say filthy inns — enough to harbor such
As travelled to destruction the broad way?
But they build more and more, — more shops of Satan.
Mis. Flo. Iniquity aboundeth; though pure zeal
Teach, preach, huff, puff, and snuff at it, yet still,
Still it aboundeth. Had we seen a church,
A new-built church, erected north and south,
It had been something worth the wondering at.
. . . . . .
I have heard our vicar
Call playhouses the colleges of transgression,
Wherein the seven deadly sins are studied.
Bird. Why, then, the city will in time be made
An university of iniquity.
We dwell by Blackfriars College, where I wonder
How that profane nest of pernicious birds
Dare roost themselves there in the midst of us,
So many good and well-disposed persons.
Oh, impudence!
Mis. Flo. It was a zealous prayer
I heard a brother make concerning playhouses.
Bird. For charity, what is 't?
Mis. Flo. That the Globe,
Wherein (quoth he) reigns a whole world of vice,
Had been consumed; the Phœnix burnt to ashes;
The Fortune whipped; and the Blackfriars,
He wonders how it 'scaped demolishing
I' th' time of reformation; lastly, he wished

The Bull might cross the Thames to the bear garden,
And there be soundly baited.
Bird. A good prayer.
Mis. Flo. Indeed, it something pricks my conscience,
I come to sell 'em pins and looking-glasses.
Bird. I have their custom, too, for all their feathers.
'T is fit that we, which are sincere professors,
Should gain by infidels."

So much for the circumstances of his time, which were such as to have deterred a prudent man from writing for the stage. Perhaps Randolph saw in these untoward conditions just the opportunity for him to exercise his rather peculiar gift. At any rate, he applied himself to the writing of comedies. The follies and the excesses of his day furnished him with abundant material. This he handled in a manner to secure him immediate popularity, and to give his work a lasting historical value. He made literature a calling or profession. His life was too short to test fully the wisdom of his choice, but it is gratifying to know that he had no occasion to regret it. He seems to have contemplated entering some other field than poetry, for in his address to the reader of "The Jealous Lover," he says, "I do not aim at the name of poet. I have always admired the free raptures of poetry; but it is too unthrifty a science for my fortunes, and is crept into the number of the seven to undo the other six."

It will throw a good deal of light on the personal history of Randolph to compare, with the declaration just above quoted some lines from his poem entitled, "On the Inestimable Content he enjoys in the Muses; to those of his Friends that dehort him from Poetry:"

"O human blindness! had we eyes to see,
There is no wealth to valiant poetry.

And yet what want I heaven or earth can yield?
Methinks I now possess the Elysian field;
Into my chest the yellow Tagus flows,
While my plate-fleet in bright Pactolus rows;
Th' Hesperian Orchard 's mine, — mine, mine is all;
Thus am I rich in wealth poetical.
Why strive you, then, my friends, to circumvent
My soul, and rob me of my best content?
Why out of ignorant love counsel you me
To leave the Muses and my poetry?
Which should I leave, and never follow more,
I might perchance get riches, and be poor."

Randolph's work shows genius, and it is not at all to the poet's discredit that this genius seems immature. His youth is sufficient excuse, if any palliation of the fault were needed. That he followed his predecessors on certain points gives his work even greater interest, as it helps to show what was popular and would bear treatment under different methods. Take, for instance, the graveyard scene in "The Jealous Lovers." How easy it is to compare this with the part of the gravedigger in "Hamlet." The idea is well elaborated. Thrasymachus asks the old sexton, —

"Are any soldiers' bones in garrison here?
Sex. Faith, sir, but few, — they, like poor travellers,
Take up their inn by chance; but some there be.
Thras. Do not those warlike bones in dead of night
Rise up in arms, and with tumultuous broils
Waken the dormice that dull peace hath lulled
Into a lethargy? Dost not hear 'em knock
Against their coffins, till they crack and break
The marble into shivers that entombs them,
Making the temple shake as with an earthquake,
And all the statues of the gods grow pale,
Affrighted with the horror?
Sex. No such matter."

After much more banter of this kind about the soldiers, one of the company asks the sexton, —

> "Do not the ashes of deceased poets,
> Inspired with sacred fury, carol forth
> Enthusiastic raptures?"

And another asks the old sexton these questions, among many others of about the same tenor, —

> "Do not they rise out of their shrouds to read
> Their epitaphs? And if they like 'em not,
> Expunge 'em, and write new ones?"

The sexton meanwhile picks up a skull which he says was once a "poetical noddle." After apostrophizing the poet as he was in life, the sexton goes on to speak of him as he has been known to this landlord of the dead from the time when he became a lodger in these quarters.

"He has been a tenant of mine these seven years, and in all that while I never heard him rail against the times, or complain of the neglect of learning. Melpomene and the rest of the Muses have a good time on 't now that he is dead; for while he lived he ne'er left calling upon 'em. He was buried (as most of the tribe) at the charge of the parish, and is happier dead than alive; for he has now as much money as the best in the company, and yet has left off the poetical way of begging, called borrowing."

Later on in the scene Phryne asks the sexton, —

"Pray, sir, how does Death deal with the ladies? . . .
Sex. Death is a blunt villain, madam; he makes no distinction betwixt Joan and my lady.

But perhaps the most comical of all this rather grewsome fun is the passage in which the sexton gives a pleading such as a lawyer, whose skull he has picked up, would have made before the court for having been robbed of his grave-clothes. A sample of this badinage will be relished.

"This man — said I a man? — this monster, rather; but monster is too easy a name — this devil, this incarnate devil, having lost all honesty, and abjured the profession of virtue, robbed (a sin in the action) — But who? The dead! What need I aggravate the fault? The naming the action is sufficient to condemn him, — I say he robbed the dead. The dead! Had he robbed the living, it had been more pardonable; but to rob the dead of their clothes, the poor, impotent dead, that can neither card, nor spin, nor make new ones, oh, 't is most audacious and intolerable!"

It is to be observed that Randolph accepted the hard conditions under which playwrights of his day were compelled to work, with a better grace than most of his fellows. He even makes concessions to the intolerant spirit of the age. He acted upon that caution which he gave, "Take heed, my wit of the world! this is no age for wasps; 't is a dangerous touchy age, and will not endure the stinging." The temper in which he worked is shown most clearly in "The Muses' Looking-Glass." He had evidently accomplished his purpose when he led Mistress Flowerdew to admit —

"Saints may want something of perfection."

The interview between this lady and Bird, which constitutes the closing scene of the play, indicates what was the author's aim.

"*Mis. Flo.* This ignorance even makes religion sin,
Sets zeal upon the rack, and stretches her
Beyond her length. Most blessed looking-glass,
That didst instruct my blinded eyes to-day!
I might have gone to hell the narrow way!
Bird. Hereafter I will visit comedies,
And see them oft; they are good exercises!

I 'll teach devotion now a milder temper.
Not that it shall lose any of her heat
Or purity, but henceforth shall be such
As shall burn bright, although not blaze so much."

The conciliatory tone of Randolph's Muse is all the more pronounced when his comedies are read along with those of Cartwright and others of his contemporaries. The fairness of the poet's judgment in that age of bitter intolerance is set in a strong light in these lines concerning him by Owen Feltham : —

" Had he said thus, — that discreet zeal might stand,
Both with the Jesuit and the Puritan,
'T had been believed."

He had to battle with the spirit of controversy at home and abroad. Even here in the colonies the good fight of faith and the bad fight of fanaticism were fought out with spiritual weapons, but with angry words. This harshness of wrangling is referred to in " Down with Knavery," where one of the characters declares, " All the cudgels in Christendom, Kent, or New England shall never make me quiet."

XXXIII.

THOMAS FULLER.

1608–1661.

THERE are reasons ample and abundant enough, over and above the attractions of style and interest of matter, that should recommend the works of Thomas Fuller to readers of New England. Born in 1608 and dying in 1661, he was the contemporary of those who first settled these colonies. Though loyal to his bishop and the king, he was also loyal to what he conceived to be the truth in relation to the Church and the State. His testimony on all points of difference between Churchman and Puritan, between Cavalier and Roundhead, is none the less valuable on this account. We have all we need to correct any unconscious bias of his judgment.

This garrulous and gossipy writer reveals a great deal of himself, and this has much in common with what the busy and taciturn colonists disclose in their scanty records. They were of close kindred in their nature. There is a peculiar quality of New England humor which has lasted to the present day, and which we call "dryness." The term is evidently borrowed from the vintner's vocabulary, along with so many others belonging to the department of taste. This quality we detect everywhere in Fuller. It differs from the wit in "Hudibras" in being always unstudied. It is also

marked by such tenderness of feeling as never to wound the most sensitive. Fuller's books had great popularity in their day, running through four or five editions in rapid course. They must have been read and enjoyed by many of the bookish men in the colonies, and they clearly had their effect upon our early literature.

Some specimens of Fuller's manner will save attempting any description. It will be seen at once that no sacredness affords sanctuary from his pen. Speaking of the law reports of Sir Edward Coke, he remarks: "If the prophet himself, living in an incredulous age, found cause to complain, 'Who hath believed our report?' it need not seem strange that our licentious times have afforded some to shake the authenticity of the 'reports' of any earthly judge." In the same sportive mood he refers to William Brightman's "Comment on the Revelation": "Sure I am that Time and Mr. Brightman will expound the hardest places in the Revelations; but what credit is to be given to the latter alone, I will not engage." The more grave the subject, oftentimes the greater the levity with which it was treated. From his place in the pulpit, the divine was familiar with exhibitions of caste feeling in the pews. Writing of Yarmouth in the time of the plague, he does not let the opportunity go by to rebuke the weakness: "Though the church (and that very large) could never hold their living, the churchyard could contain the dead; seeing persons alive will not be pressed in their pews so close as corpses may be crowded together in their graves." He deals a no less effective blow at the Roundheads for having disfigured the churches, under the plea of destroying pagan symbols: "No zealot reformer (whilst Egypt was

Christian) demolished the pyramids under the notion of pagan monuments."

True to his instinct, Fuller never omits a joke to save his own reputation. What could be more absurd than his reason for describing a Norfolk man as a mariner? "We place him among seamen because finding first his mention in Hakluyt's Voyages, and salt water is the proper element of the pen of that author." His "Pisgah-sight of Palestine" was accompanied by maps and plans so incorrect in their drawing that Fuller felt compelled to apologize for their badness; but then in his dedication of the book to Esme Stuart, who was then scarcely a year old, he took occasion to recommend these illustrations to the notice of his child-patron "until such time as he can read."

Fuller's attempts at verse have fortunately escaped notice. How they ever happened to see the light might have remained a mystery had he not remarked upon the epitaph of John Kite. In this we see upon what principle the publication was justified. "These, if made three hundred years ago, had been excusable; but such midnight verses are abominable, — made, as it appears, in the dawning of good learning and pure language. Yet, because some love poetry, either very good or very bad, that if they cannot learn from it, they may laugh at it, they are here inserted." Any lack of success in this kind of writing, however, cannot be charged to a lack of fancy. This was exuberant and sportive, as seen in his mention of a fellow-poet, Thomas Randolph: "The Muses may seem not only to have smiled, but to have been tickled at his nativity."

The popularity which Fuller enjoyed in early New England can be seen from frequent quotations from his books in the pamphlets of that day. Some of his

sayings have lived on beyond the memory of his books. To apply as fair a test as possible, it may safely be questioned whether one out of five of the schoolmasters who have quoted this for the benefit of their charges could refer it to the account of "the good schoolmaster" in Fuller's "Holy State." "All the whetting in the world can never set a razor's edge on that which hath no steel in it." But a survival in speech, unconnected with any sentiment, is better evidence on this point. Nothing was more familiar to the writer when a boy than to hear the remark when a heavy storm set in, "This is a tanned toast," or "It will be a tan-toaster." He never heard the expression except in his home, and could not trace it to its original until he read Fuller's "English Worthies." Then it was plain enough in what way this had travelled from Essex in Old England to Essex in New England. The circumstance related is that "the Lord Treasurer Burleigh (who always consulted artificers in their own art) was indoctrinated by a cobbler in the true tanning of leather. This cobbler, taking a slice of bread, toasted it by degrees at some distance from the fire, turning many times, till it became brown, and hard on both sides. 'This, my lord,' saith he, 'we good fellows call a tanned tost, — done so well that it will last many morning's draughts; and leather thus leisurely tanned and turned many times in the fat [vat] will prove serviceable, which otherwise will quickly fleet and rag out.'" The mention of "many morning's draughts" will remind the reader that in England, in Fuller's time, a decoction of toasted crusts of rye bread was the common beverage at breakfast. Its use is not yet wholly lost to the knowledge of New England housewives.

Aside from the popularity of Fuller's books here, their author must have been known personally to many of the colonists. "God in his providence," says he, "fixed my nativity in a remarkable place. I was born at Aldwinkle, in Northamptonshire, where my father was the painful preacher of St. Peter's. This village was distanced one good mile west from Achurch, where Mr. Brown, founder of the Brownists, did dwell, whom out of curiosity when a youth I often visited." The Brownists were the original "Separatists," and the name came to be generally saddled upon the Puritans. These, however, resented the imputation. A common phrase in their petitions during the reigns of James and Charles is "Brownists falsely so called." The Independents took their rise from the Brownist churches. Fuller's early home was near the home of Brownist doctrines; his early schoolmaster was eminent in Brownist circles; his later settlements in London and in Essex were in close neighborhood to the Puritans, who were fast leaving for New England. And not only neighborly but hostile relations must have made the Royalist parson well known to the clergy who were so fast removing to the colonies. While Fuller was chaplain of the king's forces in Exeter, Hugh Peters was serving in the same capacity with the Parliament troops watching that place.

But the good-nature of Fuller led him to speak of the Roundheads with almost unvarying kindness. One passage alone betrays any bitterness. In a sermon preached in 1642 he said: "I have heard (when a child) of a lawless church; sure these, if they might have their will, would have a lawless church and a gospelless church too!" His more usual tone, even

when preaching before the king at Oxford, was that of calm moderation. In the first of his sermons before his Majesty he was bold enough to express the earnest hope that there were none "so wicked and wilful as to deny many good men (though misled), engaged on both sides;" and he censured those who uncharitably denied any good in that party which they disliked. This moderation he held to through life. In his "Contemplations in Better Times, 1660," he writes: "As for other sects, we grudge not that gifts be bestowed upon them. Let them have toleration (and that, I assure you, is a great gift indeed), and be permitted peaceably and privately to enjoy their consciences both in opinions and practices."

This remark upon toleration leads up to observations of his which no student of our colonial history can afford to neglect. Speaking of missionary work among the Indians, he says: "I have not heard of many fish [understood in a mystical sense] caught in New England." Again, reflecting upon the troubles at home, he adds: "The fault is not in the religion, but in the professors of it, that of late we have been more unhappy in killing of Christians than happy in converting of pagans." And alluding to the "favorable inclination" of the gospel to verge westward, he says: "This putteth us in some hopes of America, in God's due time. God knows what good effects to them our sad war may produce; some may be frighted therewith over into those parts (being more willing to endure American than English savages), or out of curiosity to see, necessity to live, frugality to gain, may carry religion over with them into this barbarous country. Only God forbid we should make so bad a bargain as wholly to exchange our gospel for their gold, our Saviour for their

silver, fetch thence lignum vitæ, and deprive ourselves of the tree of life in lieu thereof. May not their planting be our supplanting, their founding in Christ our confusion; let them have of our light, not all our light; let their candle be kindled at ours, ours not removed to them."

There can be no doubt that Fuller's political affiliations lessened his chances for remembrance in New England. He was the contemporary of Walton. They were choice spirits and honored spirits, but the gentle angler is the more familiar personage to-day. This advantage he has by grace of the subjects which he handled. Unusual indulgence is always shown the narrator of fishing experiences, while Fuller had to address a testy and belligerent public. It is pleasant to know what Walton thought of the performance of his friend. Soon after the "Church History" came out, he called upon the author at Waltham, when Fuller asked him what he thought of the work himself, and what reception it had met with among his friends. The reply was characteristic. Walton thought "it should be acceptable to all tempers, because there were in it shades for the warm, and sunshine for those of cold constitution."

XXXIV.

WILLIAM CARTWRIGHT.

1611–1643.

IF one were writing of English literature for English readers, and for such alone, there would be found but rare occasion for even a reference to Cartwright or his work. He seems to have dropped entirely out of modern thought and out of the notice of the world. The reputation which he made in his short life calls upon us for no examination to find upon what basis it rested, inasmuch as that reputation is now as dead as the Roman invader of Britain. We may wonder, indeed, that a poet whose life was embraced within the limits of 1611 and 1643, following as he did immediately upon the brilliant careers of the Elizabethan poets, and devoting himself to dramatic composition, in which field his predecessors had achieved their splendid success, should have gained any reputation at all upon such inferior work. If we were left to judge by inference from the praises bestowed upon this poet, we should justly conclude that England had never known a drama that was worth the reading. And these compliments were paid by the poets of his day, from Ben Jonson downwards. The edition of Cartwright's collected works published in 1651 was prefaced with fifty-two contributions of commendatory verses. They are all laudatory, of course; the interest of the pub-

lisher would admit no others. Many of these pieces are superior in merit and in interest to the poems they introduce. These must contain some portion of honest feeling and honest opinion. There is no question as to the high estimation in which Cartwright was then held. This surprising fact in literary history argues a great decline in English life, from the reign of Elizabeth to the reign of Charles.

Cartwright enjoyed the distinction at any rate, if it was not the advantage as well, of being playwright to the court at the time when the theatres were closed to the populace. Performances had become rare and very select entertainments. His "Royal Slave," a tragi-comedy, as he calls it, was first presented to the king and queen at Oxford, Aug. 30, 1636. After the king's departure from the town it was performed before the university; and still later on it was a second time presented to their Majesties at Hampton Court. This was among the last of theatrical performances until after the Restoration. It is very little of light that the play throws upon the political situation of the time. Perhaps very little was to be expected; the situation was at that time too ticklish for any decisive opinion to be expressed.

In the prologue to the university, however, — which was written expressly for the play being acted before that body, — there is a hint that the residence of the court at Oxford was not wholly agreeable to that community, —

> "So we (the stage being aired now, and the court
> Not smelt) hope you 'll descend unto our sport,
> And think it no great trespass if we do
> Sin o'er our trifle once again to you."

An occasional passage in the play itself reveals something of the sentiment of the writer and of his party. In this speech of the Royal Slave there can be no doubt as to the impression intended to be given. The argument is such as must go along with the doctrine of the divine right of kings, —

> "Kings' pleasures are more subtle than to be
> Seen by the vulgar; they are men, but such
> As ne'er had any dregs, or if they had,
> Dropped 'em as they were drawing up from out
> The grovelling press of mortals."

That which gives to the writings of Cartwright a special interest to readers in America is the view which his plays disclose of the religious and political condition of England at the very time when these colonies were being settled, and when their character and policy were being definitely fixed. The poet gave up his appointment as proctor in the university, and took orders in the Church. It is quite plain from his writings, if we did not have abundant evidence to the fact from other sources, that there was a current of feeling in the universities at that time setting strong towards the Puritan cause. His annoyance at this is shown in more than one passage. In the following, from the description of a posset prepared for "Sir John," the fling is given at short range : —

> "The ingredients were diverse, and most of them new, —
> No virtue was judged in an ancient thing ;
> In the garden of Leyden some part of them grew,
> And some did our own universities bring."

So far as the allusion to Holland is concerned, we need not trouble ourselves greatly about it. Such hits are given by most English writers of the period. They

were indulged in as a cheap display of wit, and the animus was as likely to be commercial jealousy as political or religious feeling. It is, however, to be observed that Cartwright's shafts are aimed at the Dutch writers. He finds occasion, even in his verses "On the Great Frost of 1634," to repeat the covert sneer, —

> "Our very smiths now work not; nay, what 's more,
> Our Dutchmen write but five hours, and give o'er."

It is in "The Ordinary," however, — a comedy which appears to have been written after the poet left the university for the Church, — that the intemperate zeal of Cartwright is conspicuous. The prologue and the epilogue which go along with this play may be construed as evidence that the comedy was somewhere and at some time presented. It was certainly composed with a view to its being put upon the stage. It contains the only mention in Cartwright of the Commonwealth. One of the scoundrels of the play says to his fellows, —

> "The day
> Will come, perhaps, when that the Commonwealth
> May need such men as we."

If this be taken as evidence that the comedy was written after the Commons had taken a stand against the king, then it is not likely that Cartwright ever saw it performed.

The allusions to the Puritans are both open and covert. They are to be met with in the dialogue and in the songs. One of these latter is too broadly comic for modern taste. It is sung by the curate of the play, and is introduced by the precautionary remark, —

> "Hold! a blow I 'll have,
> One jerk at th' times, wrapped in a benediction."

The character of this "jerk at th' times" can be judged by these stanzas: —

> "For an error that 's the flock's,
> Name Mr. Paul, but urge St. Knox;
> And at every reformed dinner
> Let cheese come in and preaching,
> And by that third course teaching,
> Confirm an unsatisfied sinner.
>
> "Thence grow up to hate a king
> And defy an offering,
> And learn to sing what others say;
> Let Christ-tide be thy fast,
> And Lent thy good repast,
> And regard not an holy day."

The above advice is given to one who proposes to become a clergyman. The "jerk" which the poet has at John Knox, and at the reputation this Reformer had among the Presbyterians, would be quite enough to condemn his wit, were it not more likely than otherwise that the idea was borrowed.

The Puritans are most frequently rallied upon their opposition to the use of instrumental music in worship. One of the gamesters, telling what use he will make of his money when he becomes rich, says, —

> "I 'll send some forty thousand unto Paul's,
> Build a cathedral next in Banbury,
> Give organs to each parish in the kingdom,
> And so root out the unmusical elect."

Together with their dislike for Church music was noticed, with an equal sneer, the whining tone assumed by the Puritan divines in their pulpit exercises. We find it in the line already quoted, —

> "And learn to sing what others say."

The clerk says to the preacher, —

> "Good Israel Inspiration, hold your tongue!
> It makes far better music when you nose
> Sternhold's or Wisdom's metres."

In the same scene between the clerk and the parson there is a hit at the long sermons of the Puritan divines. The clerk says, —

> "Set up an hour-glass, he 'll go on until
> The last sand make his period."

To our view, the reply takes the point off this shaft very neatly. That the dramatist did not see this, may be explained on the score of his being blinded by prejudice. He makes the parson say with dignity,

> "'T is my custom,
> I do approve the calumny; the words
> I do acknowledge, but not the disgrace."

So much, in a general way, for the feeling which the Cavalier clergy entertained towards the Puritans at home. With what gracious leave-taking the Puritans were despatched to these shores, as with a benediction, is discovered from the last scene in this play. There are but three characters upon the stage, — the three choicest villains of the lot. They have assaulted an officer, and are planning their escape from England. With this explanation, the dialogue will be plain enough.

> "*Shape.* Lie thou there, watchman.
> How the knave that 's looked for
> May often lurk under the officer!
> Invention, I applaud thee!
> *Hearsay.* London air,
> Methinks, begins to be too hot for us.
> *Slicer.* There is no longer tarrying here; let 's swear
> Fidelity to one another and
> So resolve for *New England.*
> *Hear.* 'T is but getting

A little pigeon-hole Reformed ruff.
Sli. Forcing our beards into th' orthodox bent.
Sha. Nosing a little treason 'gainst the king;
Bark something at the bishops, and we shall
Be easily received.
Hear. No fitter place.
They are good, silly people, — souls that will
Be cheated without trouble; one eye is
Put out with zeal, th' other with ignorance,
And yet they think they 're eagles.
Sha. We are made
Just fit for that meridian; no good work 's
Allowed there; faith, faith is that they call for,
And we will bring it 'em.
Sli. What language speak they?
Hear. English, and now and then a root or two
Of Hebrew, which we 'll learn of some Dutch skipper
That goes along with us this voyage. Now
We want but a good wind; the brethren's sighs
Must fill our sails; for what Old England won't
Afford, New England will. You shall hear of us
By the next ship that comes for proselytes.
Each soil is not the good man's country only;
Nor is the lot his to be still at home.
We 'll claim a share, and prove that Nature gave
This boon, as to the good, so to the knave."

When Cartwright's poems were collected and printed for Humphrey Moseley in 1651, the stationer took occasion to prefix to the edition a few lines of his own, in which he says of the work, —

> "I 'm sure 't is new, unsullied, and unworn,
> Though writ before these angry lays were born."

The poet had been dead eight years; and if the play from which we have just quoted does not indicate hard feelings, — a deep and bitter hatred on the part of both Church and State, — then it is not an easy matter to realize what must have been the nature and the force of that sentiment which was prevailing in 1651.

XXXV.

RICHARD CRASHAWE.

1616–1650.

THE literature of a people at any period must strongly reflect the thought and sentiment then prevailing among them. This will appear with striking clearness by comparing the poetry of the brilliant Elizabethan era with that of the first half of the seventeenth century. In the earlier age the drama was at the height of its popularity. Never before in England had any branch of letters engaged such brilliant talent, with the promise of so great fame. The praise of the people made possible those miracles of art. Before 1650 the theatres were closed and the dramatic Muse was banished the realm ; Puritanic thought shaped the manners of society and the legislation of the State.

The lyric poets under Queen Elizabeth sang their gay, light-hearted songs with an abandon that reminds one of the troubadours and minnesingers of younger times and of sunnier lands. More of that light music than is often guessed was native to Italy or Spain. It had come, as birds of passage come in spring, welcome to a northern land. The exotic was cultivated with success. Sonnets, odes, and songs were produced in varied key, and of every measure. The refrain was in comparison a monody. The inspiration of poetic feeling was replaced by the glowing fervor of religious zeal.

The Muse assumed a more serious tone and a statelier movement. The succeeding generation delighted in psalms and elegies, and odes on sacred themes. The contrast in literature as we pass from one century to the other is strong and clear; and it is highly suggestive of a coming change in the social, political, and religious life of the people.

The opening of the seventeenth century brought in the era of Puritanic thought in England; it was also the period of the early colonization of America. This coincidence is readily understood, for the events stand related as cause and effect. It is a circumstance, however, which lends to the literature of that time a world of interest; for in those pages we shall find revealed many an inspiration of conduct which founded these colonies and has grown into the intellectual and social life of our own day. The literature of the first half of that century bears the stamp of the sincerity and earnestness with which the people thought and felt. It bears, moreover, many a trace of its lineage in the strange conceits with which both its prose and its poetry abound. These were survivals from the former century, and they often served as an ill-fitting garb for the new sentiments they were made to clothe.

Of the writers who were contributing to English literature at the time when the colonies were receiving the strongest impress from maternal influence, no one is more deserving of our attention than Richard Crashawe. He was born, according to Mr. Gosse, in 1612, though earlier authorities make the date of this event as late as 1616, and he died in 1650; so that his life was comprised within that half-century during which the leading spirits of the New England colonies came over. His father, William Crashawe, was a

divine of some note, and of strong Puritan proclivities, as may be inferred from a volume he published which bore the sub-title of "The Bespotted Jesuit." He left a more amiable index to his character in his book plate which bore the legend, "Deo Servire est Regnare," — Bondage to God is sovereignty. The son was educated at Cambridge, taking the master's degree at that university in 1638. He became a fellow of his college, and kept his place until 1644, when, with Beaumont and many others who sympathized with the cause of the king, he was ejected, and the places were filled by Puritans. It will be easily understood that many causes were now operating to draw men away from the Anglican Church. It is worthy of notice that of all the scholars and authors of that period, Crashawe was the only one who went over to the Catholics. Doubtless it is for this reason, chiefly, that his poems — though breathing a spirit of true piety and fervent devotion — were received with so little favor at first, and have since found so small space open to them in the collected works of British poets.

Cowley in lamenting the death of his friend and fellow-poet, refers to that remarkable apostasy in these lines of delicate tenderness, —

> "Pardon, my Mother-Church, if I consent
> That angels led him when from thee he went."

It may well be granted that angels led the poet to the Church which was not of his fathers, and that they would as cheerfully have led him to that of the Puritans. In the case of such a man as Crashawe, angels go wherever he goes, they tarry where he tarries, and where he makes his abiding-place, there they dwell with him also. Angels led him, we may well believe; but before he left the bosom of his Mother-Church he

must have felt that a demon was driving him forth. We calculate the path a moving body will pursue in space by compounding the forces acting upon it; but we know that if the points at which the same forces are applied are shifted on the surface of the projectile, it may be sent in an exactly opposite direction. The case is much the same with men, as to the course of conduct they will adopt, as it is with projectiles. Clearly, Crashawe was impelled on the side of his poetic sensibilities. A difference of temperament rather than of aims separated him from the companionship of brother-poets.

The English poems of Crashawe were first published in 1646. They are divided into three classes. "Steps to the Temple" remind the reader of George Herbert, who belongs to the same generation, not less by their subjects and handling than by the title their author gave them. They are devotional poems, glowing with intense feeling, such as marks Italian and Spanish ecclesiastical literature and art of the preceding century.

It is not easy to quote from the devotional and sacred poems and do the poet justice. His conceits are so involved, running on through such variety of form, that the author's work can only be judged as a whole, and any attempt to show its merits or defects from a few specimen verses will be vain. As an example of Crashawe's manner, these lines from "A Hymn of the Nativity, sung by the Shepherds," will serve a good purpose: —

> "Gloomy night embraced the place
> Where the noble Infant lay;
> The Babe looked up and showed his face:
> In spite of darkness, it was day.

It was thy day, sweet, and did rise,
Not from the east, but from thy eyes.

" Winter chid aloud, and sent
The angry North to wage his wars ;
The North forgot his fierce intent,
And left perfumes instead of scars.
By those sweet eyes' persuasive powers,
Where he meant frosts he scattered flowers."

Along with this language of shepherds one will read with pleasure a chorus from " A Hymn sung as by the Three Kings," —

" Look up, sweet Babe, look up, and see!
For love of thee,
Thus far from home,
The East is come
To seek herself in thy sweet eyes ! "

These passages will give a good idea of the poet's inventive faculty and ingenious handling. They will also show how completely he was master of the lyric metres of the South. So musical is the rhythm of this little chorus that one fain listens to the kings as they sing each in his turn, —

" *First.* Farewell the world's false light;
Farewell the white
Egypt ; a long farewell to thee,
Bright idol, black idolatry, —
The dire face of inferior darkness kissed
And courted in the pompous mask of a more specious mist.

" *Second.* Farewell, farewell,
The proud and misplaced gates of hell,
Perched in the morning's way,
And double-gilded as the doors of day ;
The deep hypocrisy of death and night,
More desperately dark, because more bright.

" *Third.* Welcome, the world's sure way,
Heaven's wholesome ray ! "

In another of his sacred poems, which bears the title "The Dear Bargain," the poet's song assumes a tone which reminds the reader of much that has been said of late about the unfeeling cruelty of Nature:

"Will the gallant Sun
E'er less glorious run?
Will he hang down his golden head,
Or e'er the sooner seek his western bed,
Because some foolish fly
Grows wanton, and will die?
. . . . . .
"What if my faithless soul and I
Would needs fall in
With guilt and sin, —
What did the Lamb that he should die?
What did the Lamb that he should need,
When the wolf sins, himself to bleed?"

The author varies slightly the thought and changes the measure in his hymn, "Dies Iræ, Dies Illa," —

"Dear, remember in that day
Who was the cause Thou cam'st this way;
Thy sheep was strayed, and thou wouldst be
Even lost thyself in seeking me!

"Shall all that labor, all that cost
Of love, and even that loss, be lost?
And this loved soul judged worth no less
Than all that way and weariness?"

The closing lines of "The Flaming Heart," dedicated to Saint Theresa, will show to what heights of ecstatic feeling the Muse of Crashawe would mount:

"O thou undaunted daughter of desires,
By all thy dower of lights and fires,
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove,
By all thy lives and deaths of love,
By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;

By all brim-filled bowls of fierce desire,
By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire,
By the full kingdom of that final kiss
That seized thy parting soul and sealed thee his;
By all the heavens thou hast in him,
Fair sister of the seraphim;
By all of him we have in thee, —
Leave nothing of myself in me;
Let me so read thy life that I
Unto all life of mine may die!"

The secular poems of Crashawe — entitled "The Delights of the Muses," and written in his youth, from 1631–34 — are more nearly in the vein of popular thought at the present time, and will give a better impression of the author's genius than his later and more elaborate work. This tribute to "The Morning" cannot fail to please so long as English poetry shall continue to be read: —

"Bright lady of the morn, pity doth lie
So warm in thy soft breast, it cannot die;
Have mercy, then, and when he next doth rise,
Oh, meet the angry god, invade his eyes,
And stroke his radiant cheeks. One timely kiss
Will kill his anger and revive my bliss.
So to the treasure of thy pearly dew
Thrice will I pay three tears, to show how true
My grief is; so my wakeful lay shall knock
At the Oriental gates, and duly mock
The early lark's shrill orisons to be
An anthem at the day's nativity;
And the same rosy-fingered hand of thine
That shuts night's dying eyes, shall open mine."

The somewhat bold reflection of Lucretius in these lines detracts not at all from their writer's claim to credit for poetic fancy and artistic handling. We cannot well help admitting that the neglect of such work for two centuries has greatly delayed the perfection of

English verse. The world will slowly, but yet surely, come to own Crashawe as a true child of Nature, with a strong filial love for the mother who bore him.

Soon after his ejection from Peterhouse at Cambridge, the poet went to Paris, — never to revisit his native country. Here, in 1646, were first published his English poems. Through the influence of his friend and fellow-poet, Cowley, who was secretary to the exiled queen, Henrietta Maria, he obtained of her Majesty a letter to Cardinal Palotta at Rome. Crashawe spent some little time in the service of his patron; but in 1649, desirous, we may safely conclude, of a retreat from care, and a rest from the troubles which had come upon his life, he accepted a small benefice in the Basilica Church of Our Lady, at Loretto, near Ancona, in Italy. The few weeks' service which his short life enabled him to render at these altars was but an initiation to that diviner service, unknown to mortal hands and lips, to which he was called when yet but thirty-seven years of age.

XXXVI.

SIR ROGER L'ESTRANGE.

1616–1704.

THROUGHOUT the seventeenth century the pamphleteers were a numerous class of English writers. Here in New England they held the field for a hundred years later. It was a time when important questions in religion and politics were up for discussion. Newspapers had not then been evolved. Some cheap and ready way of reaching the reading public must be devised. Pamphlets answered this purpose admirably. The thousands of these that have survived to the present show by paper and print that they were intended to serve an immediate purpose. They were scarcely regarded, by their writers or readers, as a part of the literature of the time or of the country. Subsequent history has raised many of these handy publications, however, to rank with the labored essays of their day.

Among the pamphleteers of the period of the Restoration, Sir Roger L'Estrange takes high rank. He represents well this class of writers as a whole. He was familiar with the matters under discussion, since whatever was published came under his observation as censor of the press. Born in 1616, he had lived through the troubled reign of Charles I. and the eventful years of the Commonwealth. His connection with

public men and with public affairs had been intimate. His skill in argument and fondness for controversy made him a powerful advocate or a formidable opponent. His temper is rarely ruffled, but he sometimes writes in a vein of bitter reflection, as in this personal paragraph from "The Free-born Subject," published in 1680: —

"I defy any man to produce another gentleman in the king's dominions, under any circumstances, that hath suffered so many illegal, arbitrary, and mean injustices from any of the abusers of the king's bounty as I have done; insomuch that after a sentence of death for his Majesty, betwixt three and four years in Newgate, and a matter of seven and thirty years' faithful service to the Crown, the bread hath been taken out of my mouth and in a large proportion shared amongst some of those very people that pursued the late king to the block. Nor do I look for any more advantage for the future."

From the very nature of the questions which they dealt with, the pamphlets of L'Estrange could not fail to touch at many points upon our colonial history. Allowance needs to be made for the natural warmth with which the discussion was carried on by heated partisans on either side. We are not likely, at any point, to lose sight of the fact that the writer was a stanch royalist. In a pamphlet published before 1680, and entitled "Toleration Discussed by a Conformist and a Nonconformist," under the former character the author gives us a pen-and-ink sketch of Puritan character and conduct.

"You object *the removal of others into Holland as formerly*. Indeed, it is not for the credit of your cause to mind us of those that formerly left us. Take the pains to read Bayly's Discussion, and there you shall see what

work they made in Holland; even such that Peters himself was scandalized at it, quitted his congregation, and went to New England. Bridge, Sympson, and Ward renounced their English ordination, and took ordination again from the people. The people after this deposed Mr. Ward, and the schism betwixt Sympson's church and Bridge's was so fierce that their ministers were fain to quit their stations, and the Dutch magistrate forced to interpose the civil authority to quiet them. In New England their humor and behavior was not much better (according to the report of the same author). Of forty thousand souls, not a third part would be of any church, and such heresies started as a man would tremble to recite. If only such as these forsake us, the land has a good riddance."

There was beneath this appearance of complacency a feeling of chagrin at the success with which the Nonconformists were carrying out their policy of removal from the country and separation from the State. This will account for the suspicion under which New England was held during all the colonial period; and it is not to be denied that the Home Government was given very plain hints as to what was the purpose of the early emigrants. There was added to this tract on Toleration a second part, in which the discussion was carried on between a Presbyterian and an Independent. It is not so easy in this case to discover which party has the sympathy of the author. Perhaps it would be better to leave so delicate a feeling as sympathy entirely out of the question, and try to find out which party shared most generously the author's hatred. Elsewhere we shall find hat it was the Presbyterian who excited the bitterest resentment.

In the course of the argument the Independent shows that, under Queen Elizabeth, the Puritans were

all Presbyterians. As to the Familists and Brownists, he remarks that "they gave the executioner more trouble than the government, and were suppressed as soon as detected." When he is reminded that he makes no account of "the turbulent Independents that went away to New England, Holland, and other parts beyond the seas, with all the clamor and rancor imaginable against the government," his defence is upon the only ground upon which the colonists ever attempted to clear themselves of all odium attaching to the death of the king. "Not to justify them in their clamor," he says, "I must yet recommend their departure as a fair testimony that they withdrew upon conscience. For by this secession they put themselves out of condition to carry on a faction; whereas the Presbyterians, that had a further design in prospect, stood their ground, watched their advantages, and gained their end."

Farther along in the discussion the Presbyterian presses his adversary with these queries: "The Independents made sweet work in Holland, did they not? And where was your spirit of toleration and forbearance, I beseech you, in New England?" The reply to this is in a milder manner than the author had treated of these points before. "You cannot say," the Independent answers, "that we gave any trouble in Holland to the state, or that we fell foul there upon different judgments. In New England, 't is true, we excluded the Gortonists, Familists, Seekers, Antinomians, Anabaptists, and subjected them to the censure of the civil power as people of dangerous principles in respect both of good life and government. Which proceeding of ours, methinks, might serve to disabuse those that call Independency the *genus generalissimum*

of all errors, heresies, blasphemies, and schisms, and take the church way of New England for that sort of Independency. They did also exclude papacy and prelacy, — perchance more out of regard to a temporary convenience than upon any rooted principle of implacable severity. And I persuade myself the Episcopal party will witness thus much on our behalf that as to the freedom of our meetings and way of worship in the late revolutions, they had much better quarter from the Independents than ever they had from the Presbyterians. There was no persecuting of men for *covenants* and *directories;* so that thus far the Independents have made their professions of liberty good by their practice."

It was only by comparison with the Presbyterians that the Independents were even tolerable in the view of L'Estrange. At the time when he wrote his "Tyranny and Popery," in 1678, the Presbyterians had been so long the butt of ridicule that the stock jests with which they were lampooned must have seemed rather stale. It had been just fifteen years since Butler's "Hudibras" was first published, and the popularity of that book must have made its waggery and its scurrility familiar to everybody in England. Under the example of the Merry Monarch, in his correspondence and his conversation, the language was losing nothing of that indelicacy of expression which marked the period of the Restoration. The pamphleteer in plain prose offends not less than the poet in his too plain verse. A few points will show how steadily was kept up the raillery against Puritanic precision.

"As to excess in eating, it is made a matter of salvation or damnation whether a man eats beef or vension.

In regard to vain words, a nurse shall not dare to still her child but with a psalm; and you must not presume so much as to ask what o'clock it is, without a text to prove that the question tends to edification. In regulating public recreations, it is reported that a man may be given to the devil for lolling upon his elbow. So far were thoughts censurable that it was held that he who sues to recover a debt shall be suspected of avarice. Cholmlye desires to be resolved whether the strict prohibition of not kindling fire on the Sabbath be of the substance of the moral precept."

It is a striking instance of the extent to which the intelligence of that time could be led away from the current of modern thought that L'Estrange in "The Reformed Catholic," published in 1679, should quote from Edwards, by way of argument against the sectaries, the efforts of these people in behalf of persons accused of witchcraft. "He speaks of a sectary pleading for a toleration of witches, with several abominable instances; and he charges the nursery and increase of them upon the Presbyterians; and that it was their indulgence, not Episcopal connivance, that wrought our mischief in that kind." This was printed only about a dozen years before the outbreak of that delusion in New England, which, every way deplorable in itself, yet extinguished forever the old superstition.

One of L'Estrange's latest pamphlets was printed in 1681 in answer to "A Petition for Peace," etc., by Richard Baxter. The writer of the "Petition" had signed it only with his initials; but there was no doubt as to its authorship. It was a plea for some arrangement by which the quarrel between the Episcopal and the non-Episcopal factions might be terminated. A few paragraphs from the "Answer" will show how useless was all argument upon the matters in dispute

at that time. Writing with reference to some proposed changes in the liturgy, the respondent says: "I hope they will not say these changes were matter of conscience, unless because the king commanded the contrary. What was the true ground of this their unmannerly dealing with his Majesty? Truly no other than the pure nature of the animal: a Presbyterian does not love a king."

The proposals put forward by Baxter in behalf of the Nonconforming party are met by an insinuation of a lack of sincerity. "Their appeal is tumultuary, and their present design, should it succeed, as certainly destructive to his Majesty now living as the last was to his Most Conscientiously Murdered Father." In the same strain are readers cautioned against the designs of those who entreat for peace. "Look ye be not cheated with their *ambition*, and never trouble yourselves for their *consciences*. They 'll shift in all weathers; for in case of necessity —

"'Pig may be eaten; yea, exceedingly well eaten.'"

To the argument that forbearance would quiet the Dissenters, L'Estrange makes reply that "they are no Presbyterians, then, for ever since they have had a being, *kindness* has made them worse." He is even wrought up to the point of exclaiming, "What an amphibian is a designing Presbyterian! A levelling prelate! We have here a compliment to New England from the Kirk of Scotland." It is not easy to discover in what particular or to what degree the Dissent of New England was lacking a full completeness in those days, but we may feel sure that the Kirk of Scotland was prepared to make good any deficiency.

XXXVII.

RICHARD LOVELACE.

1618–1658.

A FEW years ago Mr. Henry Morley compiled what he called "a little pleasure book of English verse," made up of selections from the writings of "true poets who lived in the time of Charles I. and the Commonwealth." He divided the writers, as they were themselves divided in sentiment, into the party "with the king" and the party "with the Commons." The former greatly outnumbered their rivals; for while the editor finds thirty-five loyal singers whom he deems worthy of a place in his book, there are but three of those who were friendly to the Parliament. The balance stands, however, against this weight of numbers upon the admission of Milton to that trio. These lists of poets who enjoyed a popularity of a longer or shorter life are of interest to us in this country and at this date from the circumstance that they show us on which side, in the quarrel between the king and the Commons, were arrayed the elegantly accomplished and refined gentry of the land. Our Puritan ancestors were not practised sonneteers, nor had their fingers the magic touch to waken the numbers of the lute-strings.

But Mr. Morley's collection embraces only the more respectable names of the period. There were scores

of others on either side who enjoyed a brief local celebrity, but whose work we see and hear little of to-day. What was the bitterness of feeling which marked the field of letters as strongly as it did any field of action, we shall see from this passage from a satire by Lovelace: —

"Who would delight in his chaste eyes to see
Dormice to strike at lights of poesy?
Faction and envy now are downright rage.
Once a fine-knotted whip there was, the stage,
The beadle and the executioner,
To whip small errors, and the great ones tear;
Now, as ere Nimrod, the first king, he writes
That 's strongest, th' ablest deepest bites.
The Muses weeping fly their hill to see
Their noblest sons of peace in mutiny;
Could there nought else this civil war complete
But poets raging with poetic heat,
Tearing themselves and the endless wreath, as though
Immortal they, their wreath should be so too?"

This Richard Lovelace, from whose satire we have quoted, was one of the more amiable of those poets who were steadfast in their loyalty to the king. He voices in his verse the sentiments of the aristocratic county families of his time, and in the fortunes, or better, the misfortunes, of his life he illustrates the history of the cause which he valiantly supported. He was born, to an old and wealthy family of Kent, in 1618. Fortune smiled sweetly on his youth, as she later frowned severely on the purposes of his manhood. He was of two years' standing at Oxford in 1636, when the king held court for a season in that town. It was the occasion when "The Royal Slave" of Cartwright was acted before the king and queen by members of the university. Lovelace unluckily, as it

seems, gained the favor of some lady attached to the court. He was at once graduated master of arts, although his course of study was not half completed. The youth of eighteen was given military rank and employment about the court.

We cannot look back from this remoteness of time and of circumstance upon that event in the poet's life without hazarding the guess to our own minds, or openly, that the action of the king and of the ladies who attended the queen was not wholly disinterested. It was a measure taken to attach to their cause a family of influence which was likely otherwise to have developed sympathies with the Commons. This inference is drawn from the position in which Lovelace was subsequently placed, and from the tone of his writings. He had written, before he became a courtier, a comedy entitled "The Scholar," and soon after he left Oxford he composed a tragedy, "The Soldier." This piece was never acted, however, for the theatres were closed after 1636. A large number of his poems were written while he was in prison, and it is of interest to see how he came there.

Early in 1642 the people of Kent, who were loyal to the king, presented to Parliament a petition asking that the king be restored to his rights. Young Lovelace was selected as the person by whose hand this was to be presented. Everything goes to show that this action was taken in good faith. If so, we must suppose that the youthful Kentish courtier was then regarded as not offensive to the Parliament. However that might be, he was brought to trial for the act, and on the 30th of April was committed to the Gatehouse at Westminster. It was from this place that were sent those lines "To Althea," of which

the last stanza has been made familiar by frequent quotations.

> "Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage;
> Minds innocent and quiet take
> That for an heritage.
> If I have freedom in my love,
> And in my soul am free,
> Angels alone that soar above
> Enjoy such liberty."

We shall not be surprised to find the poet betraying in these prison meditations of his some political feeling. In a poem addressed to Lucasta, from prison, he says, —

> "I would love a *Parliament*
> As a main prop from heaven sent;
> But ah! who 's he that would be wedded
> To th' fairest body that 's beheaded?"

The allusion in the last clause is clearly to the circumstance that the Parliament no longer recognized the authority or the existence of the king. In this production the poet names, as objects of his love, peace, war, religion, parliament, liberty, property, reformation, public faith; but as he is prevented from devoting himself to any of these objects of natural affection, he asks, —

> "What then remains but th' only spring
> Of all our loves and joys, — the king?"

Whether those lines to Lucasta were written from the Gatehouse at Westminster, or from some other prison of later occupancy, does not plainly appear; but from the fact that in alluding to his "birthright, property," he declares that he has nothing that he can call his own, we may conclude that they were written

during the term of a later imprisonment. His editors have found that all his patrimony was spent in behalf of the king before 1646. From this time on, until his death, which is said to have occurred in 1658, Lovelace lived in obscurity, except as his talents gave him some reputation among literary men; and he is reported to have died at a wretchedly mean lodging-house, in the poorest quarter of London.

There is a great deal in the personal history of Lovelace to awaken the sympathetic interest of the reader. His early adherence to the cause of the king at a time when that cause was rapidly losing what little popularity it had, and his chivalric devotion to that course until the bitter end was reached both for his sovereign and for himself, were all the way marked by conduct and by language becoming an honorable man. In his actions he proved the sincerity of the well-known lines addressed to Lucasta on his going to the wars, —

> "I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honor more."

The issues involved in the choice which the young poet was called to make, and the intrepid spirit with which those issues were met one after another until the wasted pauper left his lodgings in Shoe Lane, and was followed by noble and by literary friends to his rent-free lodgings in the grave, serve as a splendid illustration of what certain other personal histories would have been had the contest between the king and the Parliament come to a different ending.

No reader of Lovelace need expect to find evidence of any unusual poetic gifts. His inspiration was simply the spirit of the age to which he belonged; the very age into which he was so happily born, and

through which he so unhappily lived. He reflects the feeling with which the well-favored and well-educated youth of England stood by the cause they had espoused. Even when they despaired of the fortune of that cause, they sang with an unfaltering voice, to prove that through all the struggle personal honor had bravely been maintained. It is this sincerity, this loyalty to the sentiment of his party, that gives these poems their chief worth to us. We have already seen that the poets mostly went with the king. Of that doomed majority Lovelace is one of the best representatives. He is, first and last, with his fortune and his life, a stanch supporter of his king and of royal privileges; but he is, none the less than Milton and Marvell, all this time a thorough-going Englishman. He never forgets, soldier that he is, as Cleveland and Cartwright forgot, of the clergy though they were, that his foes are honestly contending for the same ultimate idea that animates himself, — the welfare of their common country. He is nowhere bitter, nowhere abusive; on no occasion is he anything less than a gentleman.

Lovelace is not lacking in feeling or in fancy. His verse is often impassioned. But we miss from his vividness of picturing some grace of expression with which Herrick, we fancy, would have toned down the too strong light. Take, as an example of the distinctness and vigor of his conceptions, these lines addressed to Lucasta: —

> "Ah, my fair murderess! dost thou cruelly heal,
> With various pains, to make me well?
> Then let me be
> Thy cut anatomy,
> And in each mangled part my heart you 'll see."

To this may be added a more familiar passage from his lines to Gratiana dancing and singing: —

> "Each step trod out a lover's thought,
> And the ambitious hopes he brought
> Chained to her brave feet with such arts,
> Such sweet command and gentle awe,
> As when she ceased we sighing saw
> The floor lay paved with broken hearts."

A more playful exercise of the poet's fancy is that by which he speaks of "Ellinda's Glove" as a farm divided into five separate holdings.

> "Thou snowy farm with thy five tenements,
> Tell thy white mistress here was one
> That called to pay his daily rents;
> But she a-gathering hearts has gone,
> And thou left void to rude possession."

The most pleasing production of this poet, and the one that will best commend his Muse to modern taste, is that charming ode entitled "The Grasshopper," and addressed to his friend Charles Cotton. I am aware with what ungracious criticism this ode has been partially reprinted in a recent collection of English verse. All that need be said on this point is that the critic hopelessly and pitiably blundered. The handling of the subject on the poet's part is worthy the skill, the taste, and the genius of Horace. If a more authoritative sanction than this be wanting for the apparent lack of continuity and of adaptation which is complained of, let the reader turn to Pindar and follow that poet's wayward fancy through any one of his odes.

The opening stanza of this poem will give the measure and also the tone of the whole, —

"O thou that swing'st upon the waving ear
Of some well-filled oaten beard,
Drunk every night with a delicious tear
Dropp'd thee from heaven, where thou wast reared!"

After this manner the poet goes on to describe the careless and merry life of the grasshopper so long as summer continues; but he reflects upon the bitter experience which winter brings. This reflection leads him to say to his friend that the joys of the grasshopper, which are only so large and lasting as its perch of grass, bid them "lay in 'gainst winter rains." He proposes that they make their companionship a refuge from the storms of fortune. They will adopt a philosophy very similar to that which Horace recommended to his friends.

"Thus richer than untempted kings are we,
That, asking nothing, nothing need;
Though lord of all that seas embrace, yet he
That wants himself is poor indeed."

This sentiment was admirably suited to the stormy times in which Lovelace lived. He bore himself through all that trying period with such a spirit that at no time did he "want himself," and as a consequence he lacked not the friendship of Andrew Marvell, who was with the Commons.

XXXVIII.

WILLIAM CHAMBERLAYNE.

1619 – 1689.

IT is safe to say that Chamberlayne is not read to-day. It requires little boldness to venture the assertion that he has not been read for the last two hundred years. The little popularity he ever had died out with the reign of the Merry Monarch. A revival of the taste which he cultivated and to which his writings appeal is no more desirable than would be a revival of the manners of that age; the same inherent worthlessness marks both. What kept that vitiated taste and those corrupt manners so long above public contempt was the traditionary idea of their gentility. The poet followed his instincts in his verse, as he did when he went into the army of the king against the forces of the Parliament. The blunder was a fatal one in each instance.

But Chamberlayne is worth some attention at this time, because his work fills a gap in our literature that would without it have been left wide open. He was the literary contemporary of Milton and Marvell, for the threescore years and ten of his life began to be counted from 1619; but he was the intellectual contemporary and fellow of Boccaccio. If he did not borrow from the Italian story-teller, he at least

imitated him closely. It is his weakness, which he shares with most imitators, that he cannot discriminate between the excellences and the failings of his master.

This has reference to the subject-matter of Chamberlayne's one heroic poem, "Pharonnida." So far as local color is concerned, the incidents might as well have been referred to cloudland as to Sicily and the Levant. In probability they come little nearer to real life. The reader is as little affected by their touch upon his sympathies as by the phantasm shown in Spenser's "Faërie Queene." It was natural that the poet should go out of England for his material during the civil war. Milton did the same; but there was little chance of the two poets meeting in their absence. No two works would better illustrate the spirit which animated the Roundhead and the Cavalier than "Paradise Lost" and "Pharonnida." Milton pursues the course of his high argument, and justifies the ways of God to man; Chamberlayne revives with feeble breath the old-time spirit of chivalry.

In the treatment of his subject the poet is no less unhappy. His facility of rhyming is a fatal gift. He allows any word to close the line, no matter how unimportant it may be, or how closely it may be connected with what follows. Prepositions and auxiliaries are just as suitable to this place as any other words. The effect of this is an unusual overflow, as Mr. Gosse calls it. The diction holds over, and the couplets are rarely complete, as they are in Pope and the poets of the classical school. As a specimen of Chamberlayne's work when he was at his best, these lines are taken from the first book: —

"I' the worst extreme of time, about the birth
O' the sluggish morning, when the crusted earth
Was tinselled o'er with frost, and each spring clad
With winter's wool, I, whom cross Fortune had
Destined to early labors, being abroad,
Met two benighted men, far from the road,
Wandering alone; no skilful guide their way
Directing in that infancy of day,
But the faint beams of glimmering candles that
Shone from our lowly cottage window, at
Which marks they steered their course."

This feature of the poem is made of all the more interest because Mr. Gosse and those who like to divide our literature into distinct periods have dated the beginning of classicism from Waller's day, which was some twenty years earlier than that of Chamberlayne; and yet "Pharonnida" is strongly marked by romanticism on every point. It had, moreover, sufficient popularity to be made over into a prose romance, which was published under the title of "Eromena," or the "Noble Stranger," in 1683. This is only one instance of hundreds to show that the shading off of one popular taste into another is gradual and by easy stages. It is as difficult in literary history as it is in political history to get at the real beginnings of revolutions. One will hesitate to say just where a period begins or where it ends; indeed, it is not easy to decide what constitutes a period. The continuity is nowhere broken.

Chamberlayne served in the army of the king, and was in the battle of Newbury, on the 27th of October, 1644. He makes direct reference to this service in the closing lines of the second book. The sentiment is manly, and shows a spirit warmed with the fire of ancient chivalry.

"But ere calmed thoughts, to prosecute our story,
Salute thy ears with the deserved glory
Our martial lover purchased here, I must
Let my pen rest awhile, and see the rust
Scoured from my own sword; for a fatal day
Draws on those gloomy hours, whose short steps may
In Britain's blushing chronicle write more
Of sanguine guilt than a whole age before,
To tell our too neglected troops that we
In a just cause are slow. We ready see
Our rallied foes, nor will 't our slothful crime
Expunge to say, Guilt wakened them betime.
From every quarter the affrighted scout
Brings swift alarums in; hovering about
The clouded tops of the adjacent hills,
Like ominous vapors, lie their troops; noise fills
Our yet unrivalled army; and we now,
Grown legible in the contracted brow,
Discern whose heart looks pale with fear. If in
This rising storm of blood, which doth begin
To drop already, I 'm not washed into
The grave, my next safe quarter shall renew
Acquaintance with Pharonnida. Till then
I leave the Muses, to converse with men."

The poet was a physician as well as soldier, and the influence of his professional studies is seen on almost every page. To show how badly he could write when he sacrificed physic to the Muses, it will be quite enough to give his account of a violent attack sustained by a garrison: —

"The castle, in
Feverish alarums sweating, did begin
To ease her fiery stomach by the breath
O' the full-mouthed cannon; ministers of death
In this hot labor busily distil extracted spirits."

And yet Chamberlayne has been found worth reading by those who were competent to judge what was

helpful. Southey acknowledged his indebtedness to the Cavalier poet for many hours of delight, and he speaks of him in the notes to the "Vision of the Maid of Orleans" as "a poet who has told an interesting story in uncouth rhymes, and mingled sublimity of thought and beauty of expression with the quaintest conceits and most awkward inversions."

It has been remarked that Chamberlayne is no longer read. This circumstance warrants a more liberal quoting from his poem than would be justified in the case of a work more generally known. Where he speaks of Pharonnida in mourning he is natural and graceful.

> "The slow-footed day,
> Hardly from night distinguished, steals away
> Few beams from her tear-clouded eyes, and those
> A melancholy pensiveness bestows
> On saddest subjects."

There is a passage in the fourth book which relates to the political and social condition of England in the poet's own time. It presents the different view which the landed gentry and the tenantry take of the situation. The sympathies of the writer are clearly with the poor tenants; he was himself a poor man. The passage is too long to give entire, but part of the last sentence will serve as a guide to any who care for the literature of the labor question of the seventeenth century.

> "Farms for whose loss poor widows wept, and fields
> Which, being confined to strict enclosure, yields
> To his crammed chests the starving poor man's food;
> For private ends robbing their public good,
> With guilt enclosed those ways which now had brought
> Him by some cottages, whose owners bought
> Poor livelihoods at a laborious rate
> From his racked lands; for which pursuing hate

Now follows him in curses; for in that
They yet take vengeance; till arriving at
The thicker peopled villages, where, more bold
By number made, the fire of hate takes hold
On clamorous women, whose vexed husbands thirst
I' the fever of revenge. To these when first
They kindled had the flame, swiftly succeeds
More active men, such as resolved their deeds,
Spite of restrictive law, should set them free
From the oppressor of their liberty."

Chamberlayne published but one other poem besides his "Pharonnida," and that was what he called a tragi-comedy, under the title of "Love's Victory." In his dedication of the piece to Sir William Portman, the author intimates that it was not designed for the public stage; and as this was in 1658, such a view was natural. However, twenty years later, when the stage was again licensed, the play was acted, with some few changes. Few lyrical passages occur, and as good a specimen of the writer's power in this line as can be given is the sacrificial song beginning with the stanza, —

"See, each wind leaves civil wars,
The gods approve your sacrifice;
And to behold it, all the stars
Look through the curtains of the skies.
Peace reigns through every element,
Whilst this fair pair to heaven are sent."

XXXIX.

ANDREW MARVELL.

1620–1678.

MARVELL is known to the readers of English literature chiefly as a poet, and his reputation in this character remains fixed at about the same degree of respectability ever since it became the fashion to make up a list of standard British authors and to ignore all writers who were not admitted within the company of the elect. Happily for our acquaintance with this man, he was then thought worthy of a place among the poets. But it was not as a poet that he was best known and most valued in his own day and generation. Marvell was essentially a man of affairs; and the affairs with which he was concerned were those of the State and of the general public, — not the buying and selling that are attended with private gain. Even the inspiration of his poetry we trace to his political surroundings, and we read his several pieces with an interest proportioned to the degree to which we identify ourselves with the occasion of their composition.

In his own time — and that was the time of the Commonwealth and of the Restoration — Marvell was more popularly known as a writer of prose than as a writer of verse. His political pamphlets were

addressed to the public at large, with the purpose of exciting and directing popular sentiment; and there is good reason to believe that they were effective to this end. As they were the product of his more serious employment, they would call first for examination on the part of one who would care to know the man and author as he himself would have been glad to be known. His service of nearly twenty years in Parliament after the restoration of the monarchy, called for a display of sturdy manliness in those worse than bad times. That a man of wit and of literary reputation could not be seduced from loyalty to the principles he had maintained with Milton under the Commonwealth, argues a fidelity unique at the time, and too rare at the best.

But the prose of Marvell, in which the fire of his genius burns with the clearest flame, is no longer read. It relates largely to the questions of the day and to the interests of his constituents. The best portions that remain are controversial, and are to be judged by comparison with what we have from other hands. There are blots upon them that call for a stronger plea than that of customary usage to excuse their presence. All that can be said in the case is that the reader who is acquainted with the literature of the time of Charles II. will know just what care is needed in picking his way through those slums.

Marvell always stood by his friends whenever they were attacked, and in those days open warfare was the normal state of the Church and of society. Among those friends of his who were assailed was the soft-spoken, gentle-mannered John Howe, who had been chaplain to Cromwell in the last years of

the Protectorate. The attack was made by a clergyman, Thomas Danson, and Marvell came to Howe's defence with a tract, after the fashion of the time. The performance is noticeably calm and considerate, but the author's talent for burlesque crops out in passages like this: —

"The camel is a beast admirably shaped for burthen, but so lumpish withal that nothing can be more inept for feats of activity. Yet men have therefore invented how to make it dance, that, by how much unnatural, the spectacle might appear more absurd and ridiculous. Its keeper leads it upon a pavement so thoroughly warmed that the creature, not able to escape or abide it, shifts first one foot, and then another, to relieve itself, and would, if possible, tread the air on all four, the ground being too hot for it to stand upon. He in the mean time traverses and trips about it at a cooled distance, striking some volunteer notes on his Egyptian kit, like a French dancing-master. But knowing that his scholar is both in too much pain and too dull to learn his measures, he therefore upon frequent observation accords a tune to his figure and footing, which comes to the same account. So that, after daily repeating the lesson in private, they seem both at last to be agreed upon a new Arabic sarabband. Having thus far succeeded, he tries next whether what he taught by torture be not confirmed by custom, and if a cool hearth may not have the like effect. The camel no sooner hears his fiddle, but, as if its memory were in its feet, the animal bestirs forthwith its long legs, and, with many an antic motion, and ill-favored *coupe*, gratifies the master's patience and expectations. When he finds by constant experiment that it never fails him, he thenceforward makes it public, and, having compounded with the master of the revels, shows it, with great satisfaction to the vulgar, every Bartholomew Fair in Grand Cairo."

It is easy to see how such powers of invention would serve their possessor in a controversy over some serious matter of Church or State. The sarcasm of Marvell was unrivalled until the appearance of Dean Swift. It is in "The Rehearsal Transposed" that this power is best displayed. This little book was called out by the publication, in 1672, of Bishop Bramhall's "Vindication," etc. The preface to the "Vindication" was written by Bishop Parker, a young man of little practice in writing; and it was this preface that was the butt of Marvell's ridicule.

The unsophisticated writer of the preface apologized for his part in the appearance of the book, and was laughed at for his pains in a manner absurdly innocent and condescending: —

"'He could not but yield so far as to improve every fragment of time that he could get into his own disposal, to gratify the importunity of the bookseller.' Was ever civility graduated up and enhanced to such a value! His mistress herself could not have endeared a favor so nicely, nor granted it with more sweetness. Was the bookseller more importunate, or the author more courteous? The author was the pink of courtesy, the bookseller the burr of importunity."

As a specimen of the utterly absurd in reasoning, we have this set forth with comical seriousness: —

"How perfect soever a man may have been in any science, yet without continual practice he will find a sensible decay of his faculty. Hence also, and upon the same natural ground, it is the wisdom of cats to whet their claws against the chairs and hangings, in meditation of the next rat they are to encounter."

It was to this "Rehearsal," no doubt, that the anonymous writer of the "Ode to Lady Coventry" referred in these lines: —

> "'Midst cringing courtiers honest Marvell writ;
> Even mitred dulness felt his poignant wit."

There is much in common between Marvell and Butler, the author of "Hudibras." Their fun is so nearly the same thing that it is not easy at times to decide to which it is to be credited. Their sympathies, however, were given to opposite parties. Marvell, on the whole, favored the Nonconforming clergy, more than two thousand of whom were evicted after the Restoration; he evidently thought them the more honest portion of the order. Butler had all his fun at the expense of the Dissenters, the Puritans and the Presbyterians. In the pages of the "Rehearsal," Marvell takes occasion to express his respect for his fellow-poet.

"But lest I might be mistaken as to the persons I mention, I will assure the reader that I intend not Hudibras; for he is a man of the other robe, and his excellent wit hath taken a flight far above these whifflers; that whoever dislikes the choice of this subject cannot but commend his performance, and calculate, if on a theme so barren he were so copious, what admirable sport he would have made with an ecclesiastical politician."

There was one subject, however, upon which Marvell and Butler could write so perfectly in the same vein that one cannot help feeling a curiosity to learn which of the two wrote the earlier. In lampooning the Dutch they worked up precisely the same material. We may conclude that this was the proverbial

jest and banter with which the Hollanders, who were then numerous in England, were greeted at every meeting. Butler laughs at Holland as the country that draws six fathoms of water, and where fishes come to the table as guests, and not as meat. Marvell follows up the ridicule in the same strain.

"Holland, that scarce deserves the name of land,
As but the off-scouring of the British sand,
And so much earth as was contributed
By English pilots when thay heaved the lead,
Or what by the ocean's slow alluvion fell
Of shipwrecked cockle and the muscle-shell, —
This indigested vomit of the sea
Fell to the Dutch by just propriety.

"Glad then as miners who have found the ore,
They, with mad labor, fished the land to shore,
And dived as desperately for each piece
Of earth as if 't had been of ambergreese,
Collecting anxiously small loads of clay
Less than what building swallows bear away.

"How did they rivet, with gigantic piles,
Thorough the centre their new-catched miles,
And to the stake a struggling country bound,
Where barking waves still bait the forced ground,
Building their watery Babel far more high,
To reach the sea, than those to scale the sky!"

Marvell is best known as the friend of Milton. The two poets had been associated in the civil service of their country under the Commonwealth. Their friendship was more than identity of pursuits and tastes. When "Paradise Lost" appeared, Marvell was early with his offering of praise. A passage from this will serve as an example of his more serious work: —

"That majesty which through thy work doth reign
Draws the devout, deterring the profane;
And things divine thou treat'st of in such state
As them preserves and thee inviolate.
At once delight and horror on us seize,
Thou sing'st with so much gravity and ease,
And above human flight dost soar aloft,
With plume so strong, so equal, and so soft,
The bird named from that paradise you sing,
So never flags, but always keeps on wing.
Where could'st thou words of such a compass find?
Whence furnish such a vast expanse of mind?
Just Heaven thee, like Tiresias, to requite,
Rewards with prophecy thy loss of sight."

XL.

JOHN EVELYN.

1620 – 1706.

THERE will be no occasion for any one to write a life of Evelyn so long as his Diary is in existence; and this book happens to be one that bids fair to hold its interest and popularity for all the time that our literature may last. Although not to be reckoned as any part of his literary work, the Diary is nevertheless so full and complete a record of his public career that it not only furnishes us all the facts of that career, but it gives us here and there glimpses of the life going on around the writer, particularly in the circle to which he belonged. Evelyn was born in 1620. He was conversant with public affairs under Charles I., Cromwell, and Charles II. His agency in these affairs both at home and abroad put him in a position to know the facts, and in his Journal we feel that he states them truly. That he was a stanch monarchist even under Cromwell does not lessen the value of his opinions, it proves their honesty. As political history, few writings of that time carry more of weight; and since the history of these colonies falls in with that of England during those years as a component part of it, the writings of such a man as Evelyn have more than a literary interest for us. We shall find them abounding in passages bearing upon

the causes then at work to bring the Nonconformists out of England, and later operating to separate the colonies from the home government.

Evelyn was travelling on the Continent in 1641; but as neither his university nor professional studies were completed, he soon returned. The circumstances of the time were not favorable to study. The young man had wealth, and friends at court. He was apparently looking forward to employment in the civil service. He was not a soldier, and by 1643 there was little but fighting left to be done in England. The king was at Oxford, and the Parliament was about him, not in dutiful attendance, but represented by an army. The test-oaths required by the hostile factions made life uncomfortable for a man in Evelyn's position. We find him writing in his Diary, —

"The covenant being pressed, I absented myself; but finding it impossible to evade the doing very unhandsome things, and which had been a great cause of my perpetual motions hitherto between Wotton and London, Oct. 2 I obtained a license of his Majesty, dated at Oxford and signed by the king, to travel again."

It is of interest to follow, in his Journal, the course of an educated young man upon the Continent for about four years, near the middle of the seventeenth century. His remarks upon whatever came to his notice are often shrewd and entertaining, and their value is historical. In October of 1647 he was back in London again, and though his Diary gives little information as to how he was spending his time, that little is enough to prove that he was working zealously in behalf of the king. On the 17th of January, 1649, he writes: "To London. I heard the Rebel Peters incite the Rebel Powers, met in the

Painted Chamber, to destroy his Majesty." The crisis was close at hand. Evelyn was no less earnest in his efforts to save the king's life than Hugh Peters was to destroy it. Four days later we have the entry: "Was published my Translation of Liberty and Servitude, for the preface of which I was severely threatened." As the king was beheaded on the 30th following, any words of a subject were vain, except as a testimony. The passage which came near bringing the writer into jeopardy was no doubt this: "Never was there heard or read of a more equal and excellent form of government than that under which we have ourselves lived during the reign of our most gracious sovereign's halcyon days. If therefore we were the most happy of subjects, why do we attempt to render ourselves the most miserable of slaves? God is one, and better it is to obey one than many." To the above he adds, in Latin: "And this I say boldly, for there is not any liberty safer than to serve a good master, that is C——." There were few more fearless speeches made or published during those last days of the king.

The circumstances of the times made of Evelyn a political writer, although the bent of his mind was clearly towards the exceedingly quiet pursuits of landscape-gardening and natural science. In 1651, at a time when he appears to have been living in France, he published a bitterly sarcastic tract entitled "Character of England." It was intended to show his countrymen how others saw them. The author's long residence abroad enabled him to draw those comparisons between France and England which have always been odious to the latter nation. The plan of the tract was that of an imaginary visit to London

by a foreign gentleman. The general tone of the work may be gathered from one short extract: —

"Arrived at the metropolis of civility, London, we put ourselves in coach with some persons of quality who came to conduct us to our lodgings; but neither was this passage without honor done to us; the kennell dirt, roots, and ramshorns being favors which were frequently cast at us by the children and apprentices without reproof, — civilities that in Paris a gentleman as seldom meets withal as with the contests of carmen, who in this town domineer in the streets, overthrow the hell-carts, — for so they name the coaches, — cursing and reviling at the nobles; you would imagine yourself amongst a legion of devils, and in the suburbs of hell."

There is a sort of family likeness to be traced between this picture and some pictures presented in "John Bull and his Island."

The one thing which this imaginary visitor to England observes of most interest to those who study our colonial history, is the condition of the Nonconforming population which was then thronging to these shores. As an adherent of the Church of England, Evelyn could not write of the Dissenters without strong feeling of aversion; but it is easy to correct the bias of his judgment. He says of the Independents, —

"All I can learn is, they are a refined and apostate sort of Presbyters; or, rather, such as renounce all ordination, as who having preached promiscuously to the people, and cunningly ensnared a great number of rich and ignorant proselytes, separate themselves into conventicles, which they name congregations."

This word "congregation," which names the basis of Congregationalism in New England, appears to have been coming into use at that time in a peculiar sense. It separated the Independents from the Presbyterians

in their modes of church organization and government. This fact is of more significance than appears upon the surface. In England Church and State were closely identified, but the State was at the head; in the colonies the same view of the two prevailed, but their relations were reversed. Church organizations formed in England were transferred to these shores intact. We have instances of the same thing in the removal of Hooker and others with their flocks from the Bay Colony to Connecticut. If Church and State were one in theory, and if there was no civil organization, then it made great difference when the State was evolved whether the Church after which it was modelled were Congregational or Presbyterian. Parish and precinct first gave form to the towns; and in the next century, when chartered rights and powers were annulled, the towns organized the State upon the Congregational basis.

This leads us to inquire into Evelyn's relations to these colonies as a member of the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations. His Diary is ample for that purpose. The first meeting of the Board appears to have been held on May 26, 1671. The entry of that date has the following suggestive passage: —

"What we most insisted on was to know the condition of New England, which appearing to be very independent as to their regard to Old England or his Majesty, rich and strong as they now were, there were great debates in what style to write to them; for the condition of that colony was such that they were able to contest with all other Plantations about them, and there was fear of their breaking from all dependence on this nation; his Majesty therefore commended this affair more expressly. We therefore thought fit in the first place to acquaint ourselves as well as we could of the state of

that place, by some whom we heard of newly come from thence, and to be informed of their present posture and condition; some of our council were for sending them a menacing letter, which those who better understood the feverish and touchy humor of that colony, were utterly against."

On the 6th of June following, Evelyn wrote in his Journal to precisely the same purport, —

"I went to Council, where was produced a most exact and ample information of the state of Jamaica, and of the best expedients as to New England, on which there was a long debate; but at length 't was concluded that, if any, it should be only a conciliating paper at first, or civil letter, till we had better information of the present face of things; since we understood they were a people almost upon the very brink of renouncing any dependence on the Crown."

This was early for the home government to entertain fears that the colonies would break from their allegiance. These fears had, however, been felt for some time. They were, no doubt, occasioned in the first place by plain intimations on the part of emigrants that they did not intend to live longer under English rule. Again, the fact that so many came and so few returned was ominous. In the experience of Virginia and other early colonies, the difficulty had been in weaning the colonists from the mother country. The Puritans were more than weaned before they started. The fact that so few went back was not only suspicious in itself, but it accounts in good measure for the difficulty the Council had in getting reliable information as to the state of feeling here. There was no time when the colonies were not much better posted in regard to affairs in England than the people there were informed of colonial politics.

As the duties of the Council seem to have been chiefly advisory, its action was of less interest than were its consultations. June 20 Evelyn writes, —

"To carry Colonel Middleton to Whitehall to my Lord Sandwich, our President, for some information he was able to give of the state of the colony in New England."

The colonel was a military man, and his views in regard to New England appear in the record for August 3, —

"The matter in debate was whether we should send a deputy to New England, requiring them of the Massachusetts to restore such to their limits and respective possessions as had petitioned the Council; this to be the open commission only, but in truth with secret instructions to inform the Council of the condition of those colonies, and whether they were of such power as to be able to resist his Majesty and declare for themselves as independent of the Crown, which we were told, and which of late years made them refractory. Colonel Middleton, being called in, assured us they might be curbed by a few of his Majesty's first-rate frigates, to spoil their trade with the islands; but though my Lord President was not satisfied, the rest were, and we did resolve to advise his Majesty to send commissioners with a formal commission for adjusting boundaries, etc., with some other instructions."

The tenor of those "other instructions" has been given already.

In his tract upon "Public Employment," printed in 1667, Evelyn declares his preference for a life in the country. "There is no man alive," he says, "that affects a country life more than myself; no man, it may be, who has more experienced the delights of it." This was clearly an honest expression

of feeling and judgment; he had a genuine love of Nature. His fondness for natural philosophy induced him to attempt a metrical verson of Lucretius. The first book only was printed in 1656. It is not greatly to the translator's discredit that his attempt was a failure. No English poet has yet accomplished the task which he undertook. He had the good sense to see that this was not work suited to his hand. In writing to one of his friends he says: "I know not what the word poet means." To another friend he writes: "You may be sure I was very young, and therefore very rash or ambitious, when I adventured on that knotty piece."

The fondness which Evelyn felt for country life and country scenes led him to undertake and carry through the one work by which he has ever since been known. This is his "Sylva," — a work relating to the nature, the cultivation, and the uses of the timber trees of England. The work is not scientific, as we understand that term, but rather encyclopædic. What would render it heavy reading at the present day is the circumstance that it is overloaded with classical allusions and quotations. That it was just suited to the taste of that day is proved by the popular favor with which it was received. The book was brought out in 1662. In a letter written years later, the author makes this mention of the work: —

"His late Majesty, Charles II., was sometimes graciously pleased to take notice of it to me, and that I had by that book alone incited a world of planters to repair their broken estates and woods, which the greedy Rebels had wasted and made such havoc of."

INDEX.

A.

Allegory, in Ball, 44.
Alleyn, the actor, mention of, 169.
Alliteration, 35, 49, 91.
Allusions, classical, 198.
Amadas and Barlow, 118.
America, notice of in More, 78; colonization of, 118; designs of Spain upon, 119; an asylum, 119; reference to, in Drayton, 151-2, 157; in Middleton, 176; in Crashawe, 259; in L'Estrange, 268, 272; in Evelyn, 300.
"Angler, The Compleat," Marlowe mentioned in, 168.
Anticipation of the Commonwealth, 173.
"Arcadia," of Greene, 136.
Armada, Spanish, reference to, 187.
Art, how concealed, 193; how to be judged, 206.
Ascham, Roger, estimate of Elyot, 82; quoted, 108.
Atheism, materialistic, 163.
"Atheist's Tragedy, The," 161, 165.
Augustine, mention of, 44.
Author, confounded with a character, 167.

B.

Bacon, Sir Francis, estimate of, 77; his "New Atlantis," 78.
Ball, John, as author, 37; contrasted with Langton and Wyclif, 37; with Langland, 38; his courage, 38; work, 38; position, 39; as agitator, 39; pictured by William Morris, 39; his biographers, 39; specimens of his verse, 40; art of putting things, 41; letter of, 42.
"Ballad of Agincourt," 153.
Ballad-writing, 67.
Barbour, John, compared with Chaucer, 21; with Thomas of Erceldoune, 23; his language, 21; "Story of Bruce," 24; extracts from, 24-28; style romantic, 25; precursor of Scott, 25; love of Nature, 26; humor, 27.
"Barons' War, The," of Drayton, 155.
Baxter, Richard, 271.
Belial, his place, 34.
Boleyn, Anne, attended by Wyatt, 90; trial of, 106.
Bolton, Edmund, quoted, 110, 141.
Bradshaw, Henry, his work, 45; verse, 46; mention of Chaucer, 47; extracts from, 46-50; style dramatic, 48; rhymes, 49; companions, 50; character, 50.
Browne, Thomas, how known, 229; his style, 229; earliest work, 230; "Religio Medici," 230; editions of, 230; imitations of, 230; his view of Nature, 231; method of study, 232; extracts from, 230-31, 234; perpetuated error, 234.
Browning, Mrs., reference to, 59.
Brownists, original Independents, 248.
Bruce, Robert, Barbour's poem of, 24.
Burns, Robert, influenced by Dunbar, 60.

C.

"Cabinet Council," of Raleigh, 120.
Cadence, illustrated, 91.
Calamy, Edward, beneficiary of Marston's widow, 184.
Campanella, his "City of the Sun," 78.
Carew, Richard, quoted, 110.
CARTWRIGHT, WILLIAM, quoted, 177; his reputation, 251; court playwright, 252; politics of, 253; extracts from, 253-57; prejudice against Puritans, 253-56; against Holland, 253.
Censor condemns "Pygmalion's Image," 183.
Chad, Saint, miracle of, 50.
Challoner, Bishop, quoted, 231.
CHAMBERLAYNE, WILLIAM, his taste, 281; subject-matter, 282; "Pharonnida," 282; style, 282; a soldier, 283; physician, 284; criticised by Southey, 285; extracts from, 283-86; sympathies, 285.
CHAPMAN, GEORGE, personal history of, 125; Keats' sonnet to, 125; as translator, 126; compared with Pope, 126; suggestiveness to Flaxman, 126; extracts from, 128, 129, 130; dramatic work, 127; why not popular, 127; comedies, 127; tragedies, 129.
"Character of England," Evelyn's, 296.
Chaucer, quoted, 14: his material borrowed, 22; compared with Langland, 30; his wife, mention of, 30; reference to, 47.
Chiastic order, 220.
Chivalry in sixteenth century, 103.
Choice of subject, 140, 142.
Church and State, 298.
Churchyard, Thomas, quoted, 106.
Classical studies, 129; of Shakspeare, 199.
Claudian, translation of, by Elyot, 87.
Coarseness in literature, 216.
Codex Aureus, the Golden Book, 48.
Coke, Sir Edward, mention of, 245.
Coleridge, S. T., quoted, 232.
"Colin Clout's Come Home Again," quoted, 121, 140.
Collaboration, literary, 159, 174.
Colonies suspected of disloyalty, 299.
Comedy, Roman, 127.
Commonwealth, The, poets of, 273.
Comparisons, 129.
Content, recommended by Walton, 221.
Copyists, errors of, 21.
Cotton, Charles, quoted, 219; ode to, 279.
Covenant, discussed by Evelyn, 295.
Cowley, quoted, 260; mention of, 265
CRASHAWE, RICHARD, his time, 259; education, 260; religion, 260; poetry, 261; manner, 261; extracts from, 261-64; lyric metres, 262; treatment of Nature, 264; retirement, 265; William, 259.
Cribbers, literary, 195.
"Cynthia," Queen Elizabeth, 122.

D.

"Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins," 63.
Daniel, George, quoted, 237.
DANIEL, SAMUEL, reputation of, 139; praised by Harvey, 139; compared with Shakspeare, 140; notice of by Spenser, 140; language of, 141; extracts from, 142-45; cause of failure, 142; compared with Spenser, 143; stanza of, 143; sonnet, 144; a Marinist, 144; song-writer, 145.
"Days and Weeks," of Du Bartas, 147.
"Defence of Rhyme," by Daniel, 142.
Dekker, Thomas, quoted, 198.
Dialect, English, local, 23; writing, 194.
Dictionary, earliest Latin-English, 83.
Dissenters characterized, 272, 297.
Douglas, Gawin, mention of, 62.
Douglas, James, mentioned by Barbour, 24.
"Dover Court," meaning of, 100.
"Dowsabel," of Drayton, 153.

Drama, decline of, 205; in Shirley's day, 223.
DRAYTON, MICHAEL, popularity of, 151; patriotism, 151; allusions to America, 151, 157; extracts from, 152–57; lyric verse, 152; "Battle of Agincourt," 153; "Dowsabel," 153; fairy scenes, 154; historical verse, 154; "The Barons' War," 155; "Poly-Olbion," 155.
Du Bartas his "Days and Weeks," 147.
DUNBAR, WILLIAM, his likeness to Burns, 60; mentions early poets, 61; manner, 62; extracts from, 63-65, 68; humor, 63; fancy, 63; preference for vision, 63; description of morning, 64; use of refrain, 65; macaronic poetry, 65.

E.

"Edward II.," of Marlowe, 172.
Elizabeth, as poetess, 114; quoted by Puttenham, 116; compliments to, 192.
Ellis, Henry, quoted, 198.
ELYOT, SIR THOMAS, mention of, by Nash, 82; by Ascham, 82; estimate of, by Hallam, 83; his Dictionary, 83; extracts from, 84, 87; his ideal of life and duty, 84; "The Governour," 85; plan of the work, 86; translations, 89.
English, Daniel's, 141; early, 30; middle, 23; fitted to translating, 146.
"English Poesie, The Arte of," 110.
Epithets, fitly chosen, 186.
Erasmus, in England, 59; friend of More, 75.
ERCELDOUNE, THOMAS OF, or Thomas the Rhymer, 12; compared with Chaucer, 12; his language, 12; extracts from, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19; lilting measure, 13; rhymes, 13; love of Nature, 13; subject-matter, 14; prophecy, 14; mention of, by Barbour, 23.
Errors, popular, in colonial times, 233.
EVELYN, JOHN, his "Diary," 294; politics, 295; extracts from, 295-301; threatened, 296; rural pursuits, 296; relation to the colonies, 298; translation of Lucretius, 301; his "Sylva," 301.

F.

"Faerie Queene," how published, 122.
Fairy-land, where situated, 14.
Fairy scenes, of Drayton, 154.
"Faustus, Doctor, Tragical History of," 171; compared with Goethe's "Faust," 171.
Fletham, Owen, quoted, 243.
"Ferlie," fairy-lore, 19.
Flaxman, indebted to Chapman, 126.
Flowers, Herrick's love for, 215.
Freethinking, English, 161.
French language, in England and Scotland, 22.
Froissart, quoted, 38.
FULLER, THOMAS, quoted, 114; his politics, 244; humor, 244; manner, 245; extracts from, 245–49; his wit, 246; verse, 246; popularity in New England, 246; proverbs from, 247; acquaintance with Puritans, 248; good-nature, 248; tolerance, 249; compared with Walton, 250.

G.

Gaunt, John of, mentioned, 30.
Genius, power of, 206.
"Gentle," how applied to Wyatt, 93.
Geraldine, Surrey's sonnet to, 105.
"Golden Targe," of Dunbar, 64.
"Governour, The," of Elyot, 85.
Gramerie and divination, 17.
GREENE, ROBERT, his contribution to the drama, 132; time, 133; studies, 133; character, 133; "Confessions," 133; repentance, 134; critics, 134; apologists, 135; prose, 136; verse,

136 ; dramatic work, 136 ; classical allusions, 136 ; defect, 137 ; extracts from, 137-8 ; compared with Lucretius, 137 ; mention of Shakspeare, 138.
" Greensleeves," sobriquet of Greene, 138.
Guarsie, Mary, mother of Marston, 182.

H.

Hall, Bishop, his attack on Marston, 183.
Hallam, his estimate of Elyot, 83.
Harrington, Sir John, quoted, 111.
Harvey, Gabriel, quoted, 185.
Henry VIII. and the Pope, 91.
HENRYSON, ROBERT, mention of, by Dunbar, 68 ; his use of the refrain, 69 ; introduced pastoral themes and treatment, 70 ; extracts from, 69–71 ; " Robin and Makyn," 70, 71.
HERRICK, ROBERT, his time, 211 ; " Hesperides," 211 ; boyhood, 212 ; naturalness, 213 ; inspiration, 214 ; extracts from, 213-15 ; interpreter of Nature, 214 ; his fancy, 214 ; fondness for flowers, 215 ; coarseness, 215.
" Hesperides," of Herrick, 211.
HEYWOOD, THOMAS, quoted, 108 ; representative of Elizabethan age, 189 ; indifferent to publication, 189 ; his subjects English, 189 ; wrote for his own day, 190 ; extracts from, 190, 192-96 ; plays copied, 191 ; their epic character, 191 : compliments to Elizabeth, 192 ; art, 193 ; command of language, 193 ; use of dialect, 194 ; rallying of Puritans, 195 ; ridicule of literary cribbers, 195 ; songs, 196.
Historical writing in verse, 154.
" History of the World," Raleigh's, 120.
Hobs, the tanner of Tamworth, 194.
Holland, a refuge for Puritans, 203 ; allusions to, 253, 254 ; lampoons on, 292.
Homer, translation of, by Elyot, 87 ; by Chapman and by Pope, 126 ; influence of, 129.
HOWARD, HENRY, his time, 105 ; compared with Petrarch, 105 ; " Geraldine," 106 ; extracts from, 105-9 ; theme, 106 ; sonnets, 107 ; first to use blank verse, 107 ; translations, 108 ; popularity, 109.
Howe, John, defended by Marvell, 288.
Humor, Scotch, example of, 27 ; dry, 79, 244.

I.

Individuality, 229.
Inventory, rhymed, 100.
Ipswich, Wolsey's College at, 54.
Italian literature, in England, 133.

J.

Jonson, Ben, quoted, 147 ; praised Drayton's work, 151 ; canonized by Herrick, 213 ; mention of, 236 ; compliments Cartwright, 251.

K.

Keats, quoted, 125.

L.

" Lament for the Makers," Dunbar's, 61.
LANGLAND, WILLIAM, confounded with Piers Plowman, 29 ; his time, 30 ; compared with Chaucer, 30 ; his relation to the Church, 31 ; extracts from, 31–35 ; studies, 33 ; verse, 35 ; manner, 34 ; as reformer, 35 ; contrasted with John Ball, 38.
Langton, Stephen, mention of, 37.
L'ESTRANGE, SIR ROGER, a pamphleteer, 266 ; his time, 266 ;

extracts from, 267-72; his view of toleration, 269; style, 270; politics, 272.
Literary reputation, remarks on, by Elyot, 84.
Literature, early legendary, 45; a calling, 239; English, 258.
"Lives of the Saints," 45.
Lollards, mention of, 35.
"Lovers, The Jealous," of Randolph, 240.
LOVELACE, RICHARD, the Cavalier poet, 274; his loyalty, 274; fortune, 274; wrote in prison, 275; politics, 276; extracts from, 274, 276-79; personal history, 277; verse, 277; odes, 279.
Lowell, James Russell, quoted, 124.
Lownes, Humfrey, quoted, 147.
Lucretius, a model for Greene, 137; translation of, by Evelyn, 301.
Luther's writings criticised by More, 76.
Lyric verse in narrative poems, 28.

M.

Macaronic poetry, 65.
Madoc, story of, in Drayton, 136.
Makyn, a diminutive, 70.
"Mamilia," of Greene, 134.
Mannerisms of Shirley, 224.
Marinists, English, 144, 145.
MARLOWE, CHRISTOPHER, earliest English dramatist, 166; translations of, 166; his character, 167; confounded with Faustus, 167; his pastoral praised by Walton, 168; "Tamburlaine," 168; earliest tragedy in blank verse, 168; characters overdrawn, 169; writing to order for popular actor, 169; rhythm, 170; extracts from, 169-72; his "Doctor Faustus," 171; compared with Goethe's "Faust," 171; political forecasting, 173.
MARSTON, JOHN, his time, 182; family, 182; father's will, 183; extracts from, 183-88; satires, 183; defence, 184; career, 184; relation to Puritanism, 184; compared with Shakspeare, 185; fancy, 186; patriotism, 187; jest at the expense of philosophers, 188.
MARVELL, ANDREW, a public man, 287; his inspiration, 287; a pamphleteer, 288; his prose, 288; loyalty, 288; extracts from, 289-93 his wit, 290; politics, 291; compared with Butler, 291; friend of Milton, 292.
MASSINGER, PHILIP, record of his burial, 204; obscurity of his life, 205; value of his work, 207; his industry, 207; extracts from, 208, 209; style, 209; art, 210; subjects, 210.
Masson, David, quoted, 148.
Mephistophiles, Marlowe's, 171.
Mercia, 47.
Metres, English, 152.
"Miching," the word explained, 101.
MIDDLETON, THOMAS, contemporary of Shakspeare, 174; his industry, 174; fellow-workers, 174; editors, 175; rank as dramatist, 175; as poet, 175; allusions to America, 176; dislike of Puritans, 176; extracts from, 177-81; skit at Puritan dislike of music, 177; satirizes the Familists, 178; "Mayor of Quinborough," 179.
Milton, quoted, 34, 107; mention of, 120; his father, 148; contrasted with Chamberlayne, 282; friend of Marvell, 292.
Monks, as chroniclers, 44.
Moralities and mysteries, 33.
MORE, SIR THOMAS, his Utopia, 73; work in English, 73; estimate of, 74; extracts from, 74-76, 78, 79; reputation, how gained, 74; estimate of readers, 75; profession, 75; friendship with Erasmus, 75; criticism of Luther's work, 76; imitators, 77, 78.
Morris, William, quoted, 39.
Müller, Max, his "law of laziness," 74.
Music, Puritan dislike of, 177, 225.

N.

Names, Puritan, 23.
Nature, feeling for, among early poets, 26; questioned by Herrick, 214; defined by Browne, 231.
New England, doggerel verse in, 197; humor, 244; dialect, 247; missionary field, 249; early literature of, 266; suspected, 268; Dissenting, 272; disloyal, 300.
Night fancifully characterized, 186.

O.

Oberon's palace, 154.
"Ordinary, The," of Cartwright, 254-56.
Overflow, 282.

P.

Pamphleteers, 266.
"Paradise Lost," has matter from "Faustus" of Marlowe, 172.
Parker, Bishop, ridiculed by Marvell, 290.
Parliament disowns the king, 276.
Pastoral poem analyzed, 70, 71.
Peasant War, 38.
Personification, partial, 209.
Peters, Hugh, mentioned by Evelyn, 295.
Petrarch, Wyatt compared with, 93.
"Pharonnida," of Chamberlayne, 282.
Philosophers, ridiculed by Marston, 188.
Philosophy, Greek, taught by Erasmus, 59.
"Piers Plowman, Vision of," 29.
Plato, his "Republic," 77.
Plays, how to be judged, 175; fashion of, 179; how stolen, 191; historical and narrative, 191.
"Plowman's Tale, The," 29.
Poetry, Scottish, indigenous, 12; macaronic, 65; Saxon, 67; pastoral, 70; in sixteenth century, 104; early, artistic and artificial, 112; lyric, 258.
Poets laureate, 52; early Scottish, 61, 62; Italian and Spanish, 89, 258; Puritan, 273.
"Poly-Olbion, The," 155.
"Poor Richard," reference to, 41, 95.
Pope's literary methods, 160.
Poverty, praised by early writers, 33.
"Prerogative of Parliament," Raleigh's, 120.
Presbyterians Puritanic, 270; ridicule of, 267.
Primer, a church book, 75.
Printing, effect of its invention, 104.
Puns, by Skelton, 57.
Puritan, in literature, 162; caricatured, 164; habits of thought, 133; disliked by Middleton, 176; rallied by Heywood, 195; reform, 207; sentiment, 258; character, 267; Presbyterian, 269; poets, 273.
Publication, by the dramatists, 100.
PUTTENHAM, GEORGE, time of, 110; work, 111; wrote for the court, 112; remarks on quantity, 113; extracts from, 114, 115; his estimate of poets, 116.

Q.

Quantity, metrical, 113.

R.

RALEIGH, SIR WALTER, affairs of, 117; expeditions for colonizing America, 118; colony of Roanoke, 118; title escheated, 118; city of, 118; views of America, 119; early training, 119; purpose, 119; reputation, 120; "History of the World," 120; "Prerogative of Parliament," 120; acquaintance with Spenser, 121; extracts from, 121, 123; memorial, 123; Lowell's tribute to, 124.
RANDOLPH, THOMAS, *protégé* of Ben Jonson, 236; reputation in his own day, 237; a dramatist, 237; extracts from, 238-43; his calling,

239; genius, 240; conditions of work, 243; fairness of judgment, 243; quoted, 246.
Rastell, William, his opinion of More, 74.
Reading, habits of, 74.
Realism, in literature, 208.
Refrain, the, 65; how used by Henryson, 69.
"Religio Medici," 230.
"Republic," of Plato, 77.
Revolution, literary, 283.
Rhyme, sectional, 96, 97; consonantal, 97; in blank verse, 98; in verse, 98; Marlowe's, 170; old, in Heywood, 195; double, 200.
"Richard the Redeless," of Langland, 30.
"Richard, Poor," reference to, 41, 91.
Roanoke, Raleigh's colony of, 118.
"Robin and Makyn" of Henryson, 70.
Roundheads, disfigured churches, 245.
"Royal Slave," of Cartwright, 252, 253.
Ruskin, critic of Flaxman, 127.

S.

Scots, Mary Queen of, mentioned, 115.
Scott, Sir Walter, indebted to Barbour, 25.
Shairp, Principal, quoted, vii.
Shakspeare, quoted, 53, 85, 185; compared with Greene, 132; with Marlowe, 185.
"Shepherd of the Ocean," Raleigh, 122.
SHIRLEY, JAMES, remembered by his lyrics, 223; mistook his calling, 223; last of Elizabethan dramatists, 223; extracts from, 224–28; his disappointment, 227; cause of failure, 228; writer of songs, 228.
Skeat, W. W., quoted, 31.
SKELTON, JOHN, time of, 52; laureateship, 52; manner, 52; verse, 54; extracts from, 54–58; his puns, 57; dramatic work, 59.
Socrates, as naturalist, 218.
Song-writing, 67.
Sonnet, improved by Surrey, 106; Daniel's, 144.
Southey, quoted, 285.
Spenser, quoted, 121-23, and Raleigh, 121; his notice of Daniel, 140.
Spenser Society publications, 197.
Stanza, Daniel's and Spenser's, 143.
Stranger, a non-resident, 204.
Style, cultivated, 160; overwrought, 226.
Surnames in fourteenth century, 43.
Surrey. *See* Howard.
Swinburne, his essay on Chapman, 131.
SYLVESTER, JOSHUA, his translation of Du Bartas, 147; tributes to, 147; praised by Lownes, 147; furnished material to Milton, 148; original work of, 149; extracts from, 149, 150.

T.

Tacitus, cited, 235.
"Tamburlaine" of Marlowe, earliest tragedy in blank verse, 168.
Taste, literary, 281.
TAYLOR, JOHN, the water-poet, 197; a writer of doggerel verse, 197; personal notices of, 198; his classical allusions, 199; double rhymes, 200; rhyming titles, 200; politics, 202; extracts from, 198–203; refers to Amsterdam, 203; influence in New England, 203.
Theatres, closing of, 237, 252.
"Thistle and the Rose," 65.
Titles, rhyming, 200.
Toleration, Fuller's, 249.
TOURNEUR, CYRIL, co-worker with others, 158; gained little reputation, 160; freethinking characters, 161; "Atheist's Tragedy," 161; extracts from, 162-65; characterizes the Puritans, 162; atheist characters, 163; his Puritan, 164.
Tragi-comedy, a failure, 228.
Translating, a patriotic service, 127; work of, 146; influence of, 149; Marlowe's, 166; Evelyn's, 301.

TUSSER, THOMAS, his place, 95; time, 96; work, 96; use of rhyme, 96; extracts from, 96-101; sectional rhymes, 96; inverse rhymes, 98; variety of rhymes, 99; popularity in America, 100; language, 101; use of proverbs, 101.
Tyler, Wat, mention of, 30, 38.

U.

"Utopia," of More, how written, 73.

V.

Vericour, M. de, quoted, 42.
Verse, Skeltonian, 58; linked, 99; blank, first used by Surrey, 107; in tragedy, 168; doggerel in New England, 197; commendatory, 251.
Virgil, as magician, 167; translation of, 108.
Virginia, colonization of, 118; reference to in Drayton, 152; in Middleton, 176.

W.

WALTON, IZAAK, commends Marlowe, 168; his diversion, 217; "The Compleat Angler," 218; interest in Nature, 218; popularity, 219; literary skill, 220; extracts from, 220-22; study of Nature, 222; verse, 222; quoted, 250.
Werburge, Saint, 46.
Witchcraft, 271.
Wither, George, quoted, 236.
Wolsey, his character, 53; ancestry, 58.
Wotton, Sir Henry, quoted, 217.
WYATT, SIR THOMAS, his work, 89; education, 89; services, 90; themes, 90; escort to Anne Boleyn, 90; remark on divorce of Henry VIII., 90; extracts from, 91-94; finish of his work, 91, 92; prose, 93; diplomacy, 93; defence, 93.
Wyclif, mention of, 37.

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